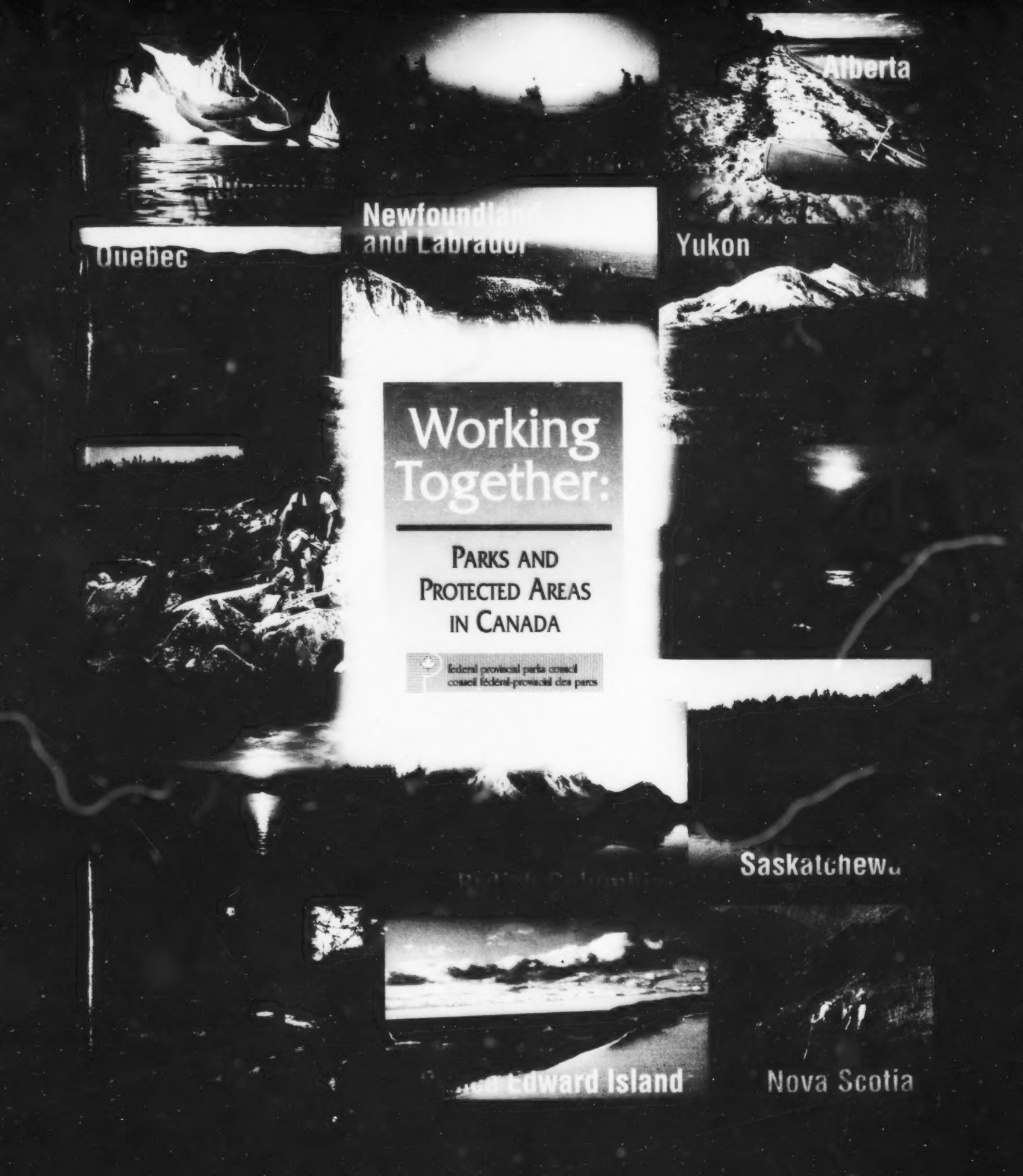
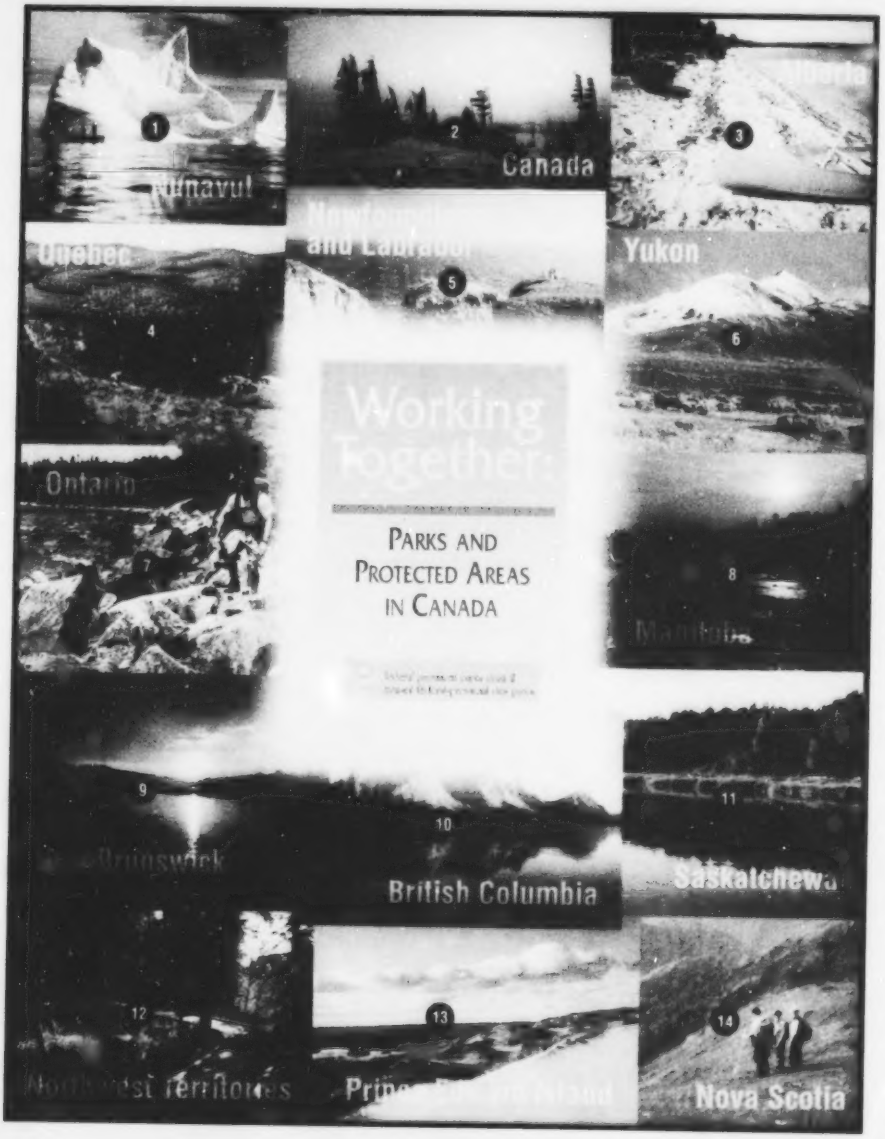


Working Together:

Parks and Protected Areas in Canada

federal provincial parks council
conseil fédéral-provincial des parcs



1 **Nunavut**
Iceberg drifting at Pond Inlet

2 **Canada**
Wapusk National Park

3 **Alberta**
Colin-Cornwall Lakes Wildland

4 **Quebec**
Mont Tremblant Park

5 **Newfoundland and Labrador**
Cape St. Mary's Ecological Reserve

6 **Yukon**
Heart River Trail

7 **Ontario**
Lake Superior

8 **Manitoba**
Bloodview/Gammon River

9 **New Brunswick**
Sunset on Nictau Lake

10 **British Columbia**
Kakwa Park

11 **Saskatchewan**
Red Deer River

12 **Northwest Territories**
Twin Falls Gorge Park

13 **Prince Edward Island**
Greenwich

14 **Nova Scotia**
Polletts Cove-Aspy Fault Wilderness Area

101-00516/

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The 1992 Statement of Commitment

Canadian Parks Ministers' Council — August 2000

CANADA
The Honourable Sheila Copps
Minister of Canadian Heritage

YUKON
The Honourable Dale Eftoda
Minister of Renewable Resources

NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
The Honourable Joseph Handley
Minister of Resources, Wildlife & Economic Development

NUNAVUT
The Honourable Peter Kilabuk
Minister of Sustainable Development

BRITISH COLUMBIA
The Honourable Joan Sawicki
Minister of Environment, Lands and Parks

ALBERTA
The Honourable Halvar Jonson
Minister of Environment

SASKATCHEWAN
The Honourable Buckley Belanger
Minister of Environment & Resource Management

MANITOBA
The Honourable Oscar Lathlin
Minister of Conservation

ONTARIO
The Honourable John C. Snobelen
Minister of Natural Resources

QUEBEC
The Honourable Guy Chevrette
Minister of Wildlife and Parks

NEW BRUNSWICK
The Honourable Jeannot Volpe
Minister of Natural Resources and Energy

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND
The Honourable Greg Deighan
Minister of Fisheries & Tourism

NOVA SCOTIA
The Honourable Ernest L. Fage
Minister of Natural Resources

NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR
The Honourable Charles J. Furey
Minister of Tourism, Culture & Recreation

Protecting a Legacy for Canadians

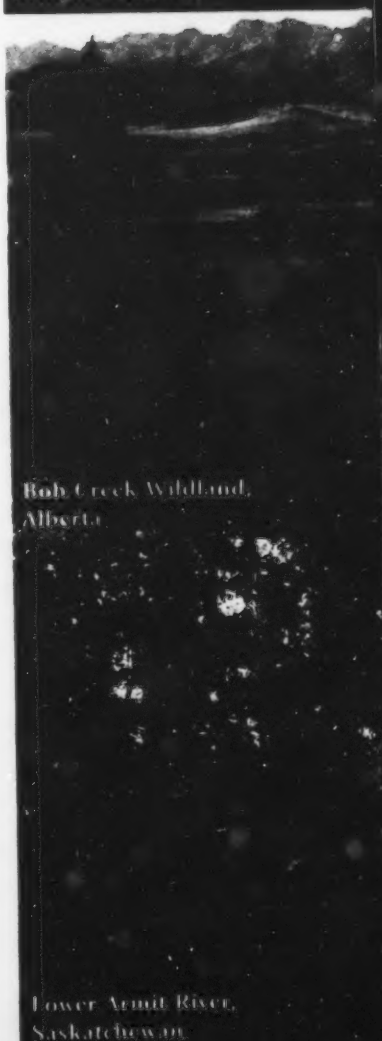
THE 1992 COMMITMENT

On November 25, 1992, the *Canadian Parks Ministers' Council* met jointly with the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment and the Wildlife Ministers' Council of Canada in Aylmer, Quebec. At the meeting, the chairpersons of each Council signed, on behalf of their colleagues, *A Statement of Commitment to Complete Canada's Networks of Protected Areas.*[1] In so doing, the key commitment for Parks Ministers was to "make every effort to complete Canada's networks of protected areas representative of Canada's land-based natural regions by the year 2000 and accelerate the protection of areas representative of Canada's marine natural regions."

This national commitment to protected areas[2] was developed and signed during a period of heightened environmental awareness in Canada and around the world. It followed the 1987 publication of *Our Common Future* - the Brundtland Report - which had stated that one of the prerequisites for achieving sustainable development was to protect representative samples of the planet's ecosystems. It also mirrored the *World Wildlife Fund's Endangered Spaces Campaign*, a program launched in 1989 to encourage Canada's governments "to establish a network of protected areas representing all the natural regions of Canada by the year 2000." During 1992, when the *Statement of Commitment* was being drafted, the international community witnessed the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, when the world's leaders met to discuss global environmental issues and to sign treaties on biodiversity conservation and climate change. The *Statement of Commitment* reflected widespread public support among Canadians for the establishment of more protected areas.

The signing of the *Statement of Commitment* marked a significant point in Canada's efforts to establish protected areas. Governments in Canada have been establishing protected areas for more than 100 years, but with the *Statement of Commitment*, they agreed on a consistent national goal for protected areas. The *Statement of Commitment* reflected the commitment of each government to completing networks of protected areas that are "representative of Canada's land-based natural regions ...". For those jurisdictions with marine ecosystems, it also reflected a commitment to "the protection of areas representative of Canada's marine natural regions."

Strathcona Park, British Columbia



Bob Creek Wildland, Alberta

Lower Arnuit River, Saskatchewan

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1 Representatives of the Canadian Council of Forest Ministers and of Canada's four national Aboriginal organizations also attended the meeting and endorsed the Statement of Commitment.

2 "Protected area" is used throughout the text to describe all kinds of protected areas, including parks. IUCN - The World Conservation Union defines a protected area as "an area of land/or sea especially dedicated to the protection and maintenance of biological diversity, and of natural and associated cultural resources, managed through legal or other effective means."

Killarney, Ontario

Hautes-Gorges-de-la-Rivière-Malbaie, Quebec

Mount Carleton Summit, New Brunswick

Although Canada's *Statement of Commitment* contains a common goal, it respects each government's authority to establish protected areas according to its own needs and priorities. The determination of what constitutes a protected area has been left to each jurisdiction to define in light of its own particular legislative mandate, policies, and system plans. Over the past eight years, each government has pursued its commitments through its existing networks of protected areas, and through existing and new planning processes. This report describes the achievements of Canada's parks agencies in fulfilling the commitments made in 1992.

ACHIEVEMENTS SINCE 1992

TERRESTRIAL

Since 1992, governments across the country have made sustained and concerted efforts to complete their systems of protected areas.

Much work has been done by many governments to put in place the mechanisms that are needed to establish new protected areas. In some cases, governments needed to develop or revise the legislative or planning basis for their systems. Other governments needed to develop a strategy and the processes for completing their systems. Some governments already had these mechanisms in place and were able to continue with the work of creating new protected areas. Initiatives such as British Columbia's *Protected Areas Strategy (1992)*, Alberta's *Special Places Program*, Manitoba's *An Action Plan For Manitoba's Network Of Protected Areas 1996-1998*, Ontario's *Living Legacy Land Use Strategy*, Quebec's *Plan d'action sur les parcs: La nature en héritage* (1992), the Northwest Territories' *Protected Areas Strategy*, the Yukon's *"Wild Spaces, Protected Places": A Protected Areas Strategy for the Yukon* (1998) and Nova Scotia's *Protected Areas Strategy* have all translated the broad direction of the *Statement of Commitment* into on-the-ground results regarding the creation of new protected areas.

Clearly, on-the-ground action is the measure of success in completing the protected areas systems. Governments have devoted themselves to working with stakeholders, especially at the local level, to reach agreements on important and often difficult land use decisions. Through complex planning and consultation processes, governments and citizens have worked diligently in all parts of the country to achieve commonly shared land use and protected areas goals.

The results of these efforts have been significant. In total, Canada's parks agencies have added approximately 24,145,096 hectares to the various systems of protected areas since 1992[1]. This is an area approximately the size of the United Kingdom. The new protected areas range in size from small woodlots in southern Canada to huge protected wilderness areas in more northerly regions. And these figures do not include lands that are still under active consideration for potential protected area status with negotiations and discussions continuing across the country. Many more protected areas will soon be established and the total area protected is expected to increase steadily in the coming months and years.

These achievements would not have been possible without consistently strong public interest in protected areas establishment. In all parts of the country,

[1] This figure is the total of figures provided by Parks Canada (6,661,700 ha), Nunavut (127,000 ha), Northwest Territories (5,300 ha), Yukon (16,540 ha), British Columbia (5,120,000 ha), Alberta (650,000 ha), Saskatchewan (2,700,000 ha), Manitoba (4,052,500 ha), Ontario (3,228,994 ha), Quebec (166,000 ha), New Brunswick (12,374 ha), Nova Scotia (291,800 ha), Prince Edward Island (5,900 ha), and Newfoundland and Labrador (1,106,988 ha).

Canadians have repeatedly expressed their support for their government's efforts to create new protected areas. Through direct participation in the work to establish protected areas, advocacy for individual protected areas, and in public opinion polls, Canadians have spoken clearly and passionately about their desires to see this country's natural heritage protected for future generations. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, more than 600,000 Canadians signed the *Wilderness Charter* as part of the *Endangered Spaces Campaign* and called for government action to complete Canada's networks of protected areas. In 1995, *The Environmental Monitor* concluded that more than eight in ten Canadians favoured setting aside more land as protected areas[4]. A November 1999 poll revealed that nine out of ten Canadians (91%) believe that it is important to them that their governments take action to protect wilderness and that eight out of ten Canadians (80%) agree that consideration should be given to establishing protected areas in Canada's forests before decisions are made about where logging and mining can take place[5]. Some have expressed their commitment to conservation by donating land to governments and other organizations, such as the *Nature Conservancy of Canada*, specifically for the purpose of creating or contributing to a new protected area.

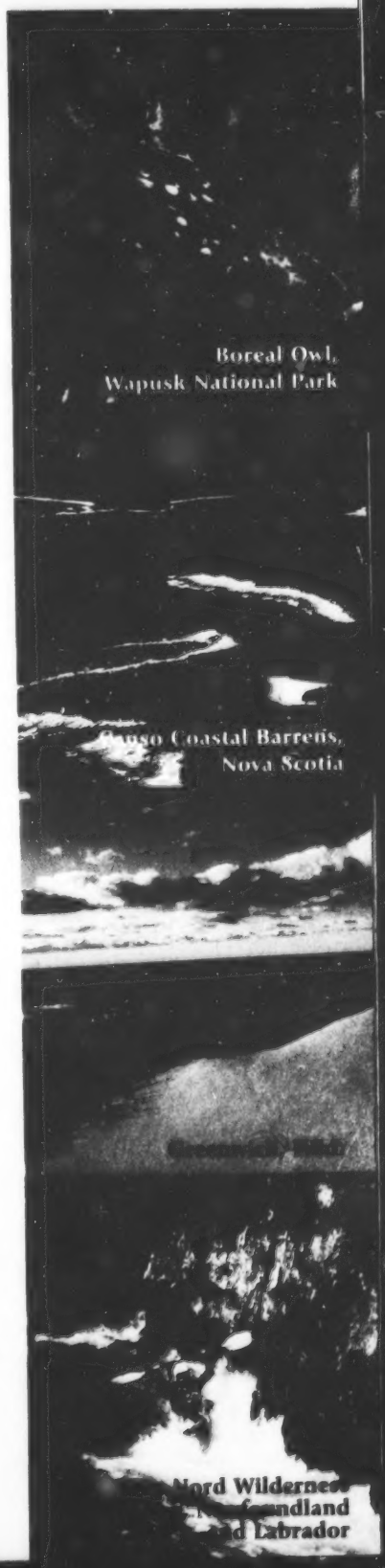
Aboriginal people have played an important role in the establishment of new protected areas across the country, particularly in the north. Canada's newest national park — **Sirmilik**, found at the north end of Baffin Island in Nunavut — was created in 1999 through an agreement between the federal government and the Inuit of the eastern Arctic.

Canadian industry has also contributed to the establishment of new protected areas in recent years. By surrendering or donating timber and mineral rights, exploration rights, oil and gas tenures, and land holdings, individual companies have played an important role in the creation of some of the new protected areas across the country. Some industries have endorsed the protected areas strategies adopted by governments and have participated actively in their implementation.

All Canadians can share in the pride and satisfaction that comes from creating this legacy of protected areas for the future.

Despite this degree of public and industry support, establishing protected areas remains a complex and time-consuming process across Canada. Protected areas cannot be established unilaterally by governments. They must always be the product of negotiations with partners and stakeholders to generate the necessary understanding and support. Where competing land use interests exist, they must be addressed before a protected area can be created. Canada's governments are committed to working with partners and stakeholders as an essential part of ongoing efforts to establish more protected areas.

In the 21st century, Canadians will look back at the *1992 Statement of Commitment* as a decisive point in Canada's long history of creating protected areas. It focused government's attention on the importance of protecting



[4] The question asked was "How do you feel about setting aside examples of each of the types of natural ecological zones in your province and protecting them from development, even though this could have some economic consequences because of reduced forestry and mining activities in these areas? Are you Strongly in favour, Somewhat in favour, Somewhat opposed or Strongly opposed?"

[5] The questions asked in the poll were "In 1992, Canada's governments agreed to protect Canada's wilderness by creating a national network of parks and protected areas by the year 2000. Opportunities now exist for Canadian governments to protect more than 40 million acres of additional wilderness habitat across Canada. How important is it to you that Canadian governments take action to protect an additional 40 million acres of wilderness? Would you say it is very important, somewhat important, not very important or not at all important?" and "Some people say that before decisions are made about where logging and mining takes place, consideration should be given to protecting Canada's forests, even if there could be negative economic consequences in some regions. How strongly do you agree with this statement? Would you say you agree strongly, agree somewhat, disagree somewhat or strongly disagree?

Caribou Bull, Yukon

Gwich'in, Northwest Territories

Inuksuit, Nunavut

Canada's natural heritage. It ushered in an unprecedented period of intense effort to establish new parks and protected areas. And, above all, it produced results that speak for themselves.

MARINE

In recent years, park agencies in Canada have begun to turn their attention towards the establishment of protected areas in Canada's marine environment. This work has consisted of identifying the distinctive marine ecosystems found in Canada's waters, developing the planning and legislative tools, and intergovernmental cooperation mechanisms that are necessary for creating systems of marine protected areas, and beginning to identify and study specific areas for potential protection. As such, Canada is at a very early stage in its efforts to establish marine protected areas, with a promising start made through emerging legislation and policy. In 1996, for example, the federal government passed *The Oceans Act*, providing a new mechanism for establishing protected areas in the marine environment.

As well, in 1998, the governments of Canada and Quebec jointly created the **Saguenay-St. Lawrence Marine Park**, the first marine park resulting from a federal-provincial agreement. Currently the federal government, in cooperation with the governments of British Columbia and Ontario, has launched studies into the feasibility of establishing new marine conservation areas in the southern Strait of Georgia (British Columbia) and in Lake Superior (Ontario). Finally, a *Marine Protected Areas Strategy* for the Pacific Coast is in preparation as a joint initiative of the federal and B.C. governments.

WHAT REMAINS TO BE DONE

Despite the noteworthy success across the country, most of Canada's networks of protected areas have yet to be completed. Much work remains to be done to achieve the goals of the *1992 Statement of Commitment*, particularly in areas where private land ownership presents special challenges. New areas to be protected will need to be identified, and consultations and discussions with stakeholders will continue, aimed at developing effective agreements and land use strategies. As the new century unfolds, more protected areas will be established.

The challenge facing government agencies in the marine environment is particularly significant, due to inherent jurisdictional complexity, a more limited knowledge base and inventory of marine resources and ecosystems, and the need to reconcile protected area status with established patterns of use. However, the legislative, policy and planning bases for future efforts to protect special features and representative samples of Canada's diverse marine ecosystems are currently being developed, where required, and the establishment of marine protected areas will continue to gain importance in the coming years.

The following pages contain additional details about each government's progress in meeting its 1992 commitment as well as photographs of successes to date.■

Canada

The Government of Canada is committed to continuing progress towards its goal of completing the system of national parks, and advancing the system of national marine conservation areas. It is working towards the establishment of a national park in each of the 39 national park natural regions defined by the *National Park System Plan* (1990) and establishing new marine conservation areas in the 29 marine regions defined by *Sea to Sea to Sea, Canada's National Marine Conservation Areas System Plan* (1995).

PROGRESS TOWARDS THE GOAL: NATIONAL PARKS

Since 1992, the federal government has made significant progress toward completing the system of national parks. Five new national parks - **Vuntut** in Yukon, **Tuktut Nogait** and **Aulavik** in NWT, **Wapusk** in Manitoba and **Sirmilik** in Nunavut were established to represent previously unrepresented natural regions.

Vuntut National Park (435,000 ha) - This park was established in 1993 through the final agreement of the *Vuntut Gwitchin* people of the northern Yukon. **Vuntut** lies adjacent to **Ivvavik National Park** and together, the two national parks protect important habitat of the Porcupine caribou herd, one of the largest herds in North America. **Vuntut** also protects important wetlands including the **Old Crow Flats**, which is important habitat for geese, ducks and other waterfowl. The area has been home to *Vuntut Gwitchin* peoples and their ancestors for thousands of years.

Tuktut Nogait National Park (1,634,000 ha) - The 1996 agreement between Canada and the *Inuvialuit* of the Western Arctic established this park on the Arctic coast some 400 km east of Inuvik. **Tuktut Nogait** protects part of the calving grounds for the Bluenose herd of barrenground caribou. Spectacular river canyons provide habitat for hawks, falcons, and other birds of prey.

Aulavik National Park (1,220,000 ha) - The basis for this park is the 1992 agreement between Canada and the *Inuvialuit* of the Western Arctic. Located on the northern part of Banks Island in the western Arctic, **Aulavik** protects vast tundra landscapes, abundant northern wildlife and thousands of archaeological sites. Hiking and canoeing on the Thomsen River are popular visitor activities.

Wapusk National Park (1,147,500 ha) - The 1996 Canada-Manitoba agreement resulted in the establishment of **Wapusk National Park** on the coast of Hudson Bay in northern Manitoba. This park protects extensive coastal wetlands and one of the largest denning areas in the world for polar bears. The Hudson Bay coastline is a key habitat for waterfowl and shorebirds.

Brock River, Tuktut Nogait National Park, NWT

Five new national parks were established to represent previously unrepresented natural regions.

Thomsen River, Aulavik National Park, NWT

...nal Park, Yukon

Sirmilik National Park (2,225,200 ha) - **Sirmilik** is the result of the 1999 agreement between Canada and the Inuit of the eastern Arctic. Located at the northern end of Baffin Island and adjacent Bylot Island, **Sirmilik** protects a spectacular landscape of steep-sided fjords, rugged mountains, alpine glaciers, and productive coastal lowlands. The national park and adjacent waters are home to whales, seals and polar bear. The hundreds of archaeological sites in and around the park are testimony to a long history of use and occupation by modern Inuit and their ancestors.

Two of these parks — **Vuntut** and **Tuktut Nogait** — are now legislated while the other three will be formally established through amendments to the *Canada National Parks Act* in the near future. These five new parks will bring an additional 6,661,700 hectares into Canada's national parks system. With these achievements, twenty-five of the thirty-nine national park natural regions are now represented within Canada's national parks and national park reserves, compared with only twenty regions that were represented in 1992.

In 1999, an agreement was signed with the *Qikiqtani Inuit Association* to convert two national park reserves in Nunavut — **Auyuittuq** and **Quttinirpaaq** (previously known as Ellesmere Island) — into national parks. Significant progress has also been made in the majority of the remaining unrepresented regions:

- land is being acquired for a new national park in the Gulf Islands of British Columbia,
- the federal government is negotiating with the provincial government to establish a new national park in the Interlake region of Manitoba,
- the federal government is negotiating with the *Kivalliq Inuit Association* to establish **Ukkusiksalik National Park** at Wager Bay in Nunavut,
- the federal government and the Government of Nunavut are studying the feasibility of establishing a new national park on Bathurst Island,
- lands for a possible national park in the Torngat Mountains of Labrador have been protected from development under a provincial moratorium,
- lands surrounding the East Arm of Great Slave Lake in NWT have been given interim protection, for possible national park purposes, under a federal land withdrawal pending resolution of Aboriginal land claims,

Arctic Tern, ...k National Park, NWT

- initial work is underway on the Mealy Mountains of Labrador and on the Wolf Lake area of Yukon. Local Aboriginal people are playing an important role in these two projects.

In these unrepresented regions, the federal government is working diligently with provincial and territorial partners, Aboriginal people and stakeholders to address the many complex issues that must be resolved before a national park can be established.

Most important among these issues are: Aboriginal land claims; traditional use of the land by local communities; conflicting land uses, such as mining or logging; and problems of identifying proposed park areas with acceptable ecological integrity in the more highly developed and fragmented southern regions of the country. Although progress in resolving these issues satisfactorily cannot be determined solely by *Parks Canada*, it is anticipated that this work will lead to the establishment of new national parks in the coming few years.

NATIONAL MARINE CONSERVATION AREAS

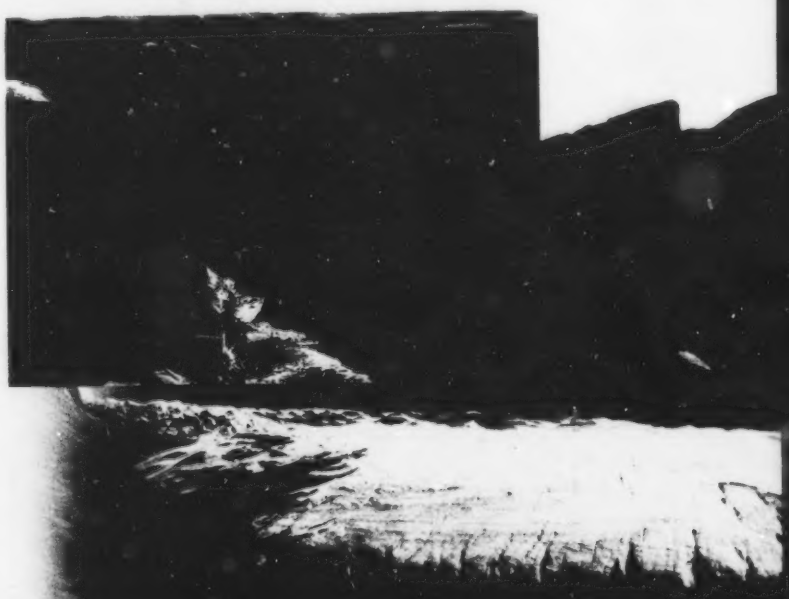
Currently, five of the twenty-nine national marine conservation area natural regions are represented, or are the subject of signed federal-provincial agreements, within Canada's system of national marine conservation areas or NMCAs.

In 1998, the Governments of Canada and Québec jointly created **The Saguenay—St. Lawrence Marine Park**, the first marine park resulting from a federal-provincial agreement. Currently, in cooperation with respective provincial governments, the federal government has launched studies into the feasibility of establishing new marine conservation areas in the southern Strait of Georgia in British Columbia and in Lake Superior. Also, the government is cooperating with the provincial government of British Columbia to select an area for further consideration as a marine conservation area in Queen Charlotte Sound.

Of particular importance to advancing the system of NMCAs, the proposed *Marine Conservation Areas Act* (Bill C-48, now C-8) was introduced in the House of Commons in June 1998. This proposed legislation will provide the necessary authorities and mechanisms to establish and manage national marine conservation areas.

Oliver Sound, Sirmilik National Park, Nunavut

Hornaday River, Tuktut Nogait National Park, NWT



Oliver S
Sirmilik
Nunavut

Arctic Oxytropis, Aulavik National Park, NWT

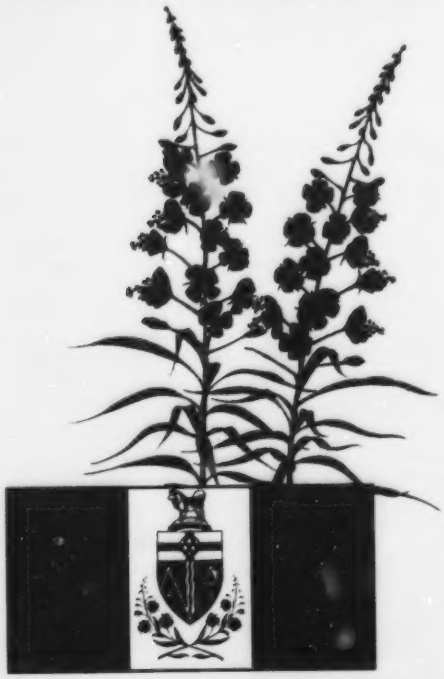
As is the case in completing the national parks system, the pace of progress in establishing new NMCAs is beyond the exclusive control of *Parks Canada*. There are complex regional issues and long-established resource uses associated with areas that could be considered for marine conservation area status. The government must address these factors, in cooperation with provincial and territorial governments, Aboriginal people, coastal communities, resource users, and other stakeholders, before new marine conservation areas can be established.

Parks Canada will continue to focus as a priority on the completion of the national parks system

Hornaday Lake, Tuktut Nogait National Park, NWT

FUTURE ACTION

Parks Canada will continue to focus as a priority on the completion of the national parks system, and on the advancement of the system of national marine conservation areas, representative of Canada's terrestrial and marine environments respectively.■



Yukon

The Yukon Government adopted its *Wild Spaces & Protected Places: A Protected Areas Strategy* for the Yukon in December 1998. The *Strategy* is being used to create a protected areas network based on ecosystem management, conservation biology, sustainable economies and the values, history and knowledge of Yukon people.

The *Strategy's* first goal is to protect core areas within each of the Yukon's twenty-three identified ecoregions. This will be done using criteria established to determine ecoregion representation and ecological viability. Naturalness criteria, economic, social, cultural, research and education values will also be considered during the protected area establishment process.

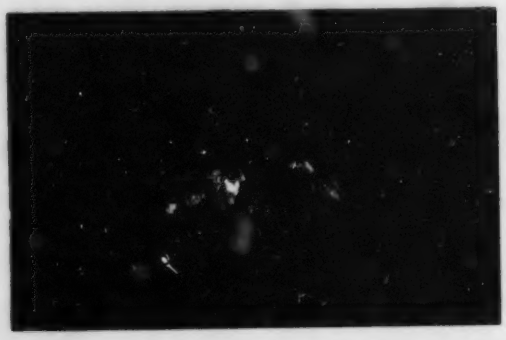
The *Strategy's* second goal is to protect special sites that have uncommon landforms or features, sites with important wildlife, habitat, cultural and outdoor recreational values, or other wilderness areas with intact ecosystems. The Goal 2 protection level will vary based on the objectives identified for a particular area.

LAND CLAIM SETTLEMENTS A PRIORITY

Related to the strategy is the Yukon Government's commitment to settle land claims with each of the fourteen First Nations within the territory. Seven of the fourteen claims have been settled since 1992.

There is opportunity through the land claim process for First Nations, the federal and territorial governments to negotiate *Special Management Areas (SMAs)* to protect regions within a specific traditional territory. These *SMAs* will contribute to the completion of the *Protected Areas Strategy* even though they are not created through the same process e.g. **Tombstone Territorial Park** and **Lhutsaw Habitat Protection Area**.

The Yukon *Protected Areas Strategy* stipulates that protected areas will not be designated in regions of the territory where land claims have not been settled. The government is committed to establishing protected areas in a First Nations' traditional territory only after the settlement of each claim.



Coal River Springs, Yukon

Klutlan Plateau, Yukon

Seven of the fourteen claims have been settled since 1992.

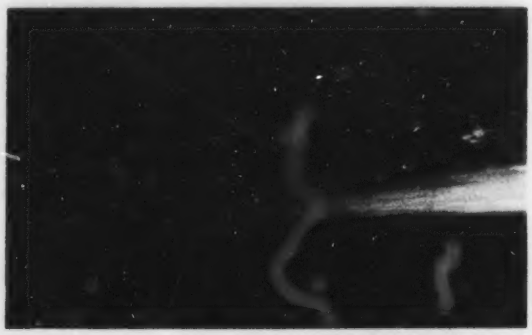
ONGOING PROGRESS

The government established its *Protected Areas Secretariat* in 1999. *The Secretariat's* main role is to implement the *Strategy* and participate in other protected area planning initiatives within the government, e.g. *SMAs*.

The Secretariat began the year with the establishment of a Local Planning Team to work on the creation of a Goal 1 protected area for the Fishing Branch region of the territory. *The Secretariat* was also involved in the work on the **Tombstone Territorial Park** which was established as a *Special Management Area* under the *Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in Final Agreement*. Boundaries for both the **Fishing Branch Wilderness Preserve/Habitat Protection Area** and **Tombstone Territorial Park** were approved by the Yukon Government in December 1999.

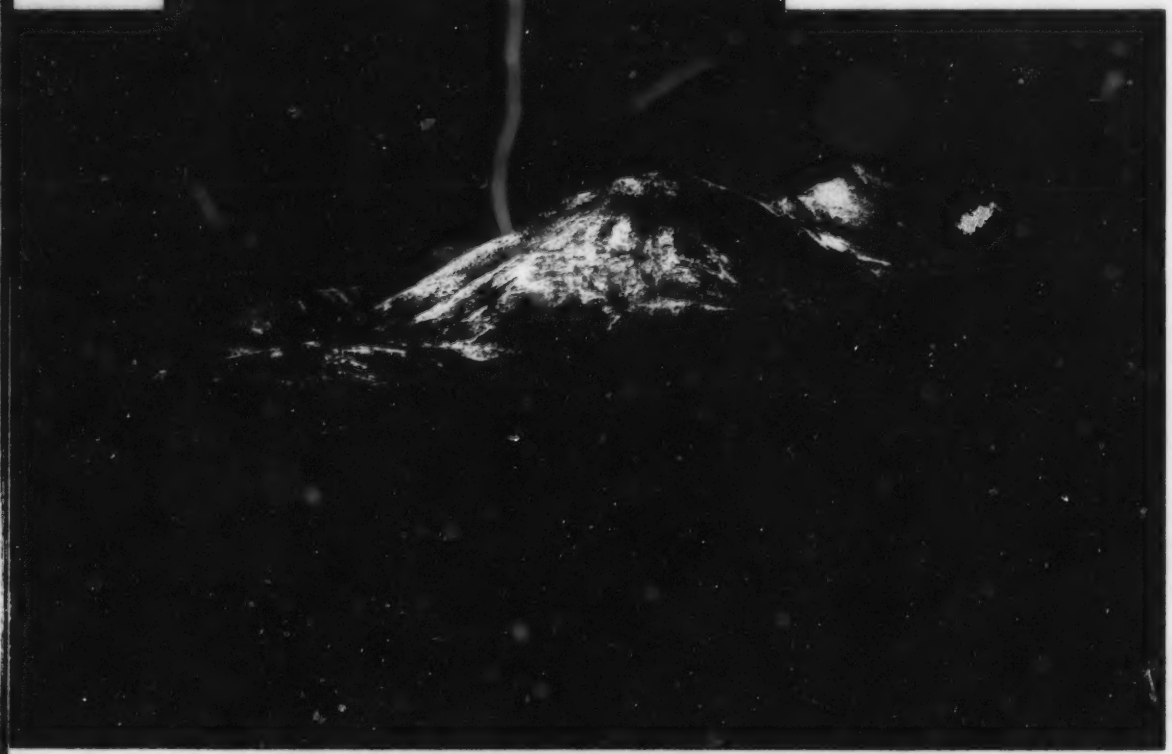
The Secretariat also began work on a strategic framework for protecting wetlands, conducted field work in the northeast Yukon in preparation of the next planning area, and started work on the refinement of criteria for selecting area for the process.

Based on the approved 1999-2000 workplan, current initiatives include: management planning for both the **Tombstone Territorial Park** and **Fishing Branch Wilderness Preserve/HPA**, drafting *Yukon Parks Act* amendments to ensure the legislation is able to implement the *Protected Areas Strategy*; continued participation and cooperation with the *Teslin Renewable Resource Council, Teslin Tlingit Council* and *Parks Canada* in considering options for protected areas within the *Teslin Tlingit* traditional territory.



Herschel Island, Yukon

Pauline Cove, Yukon



Heart River Trail, Yukon

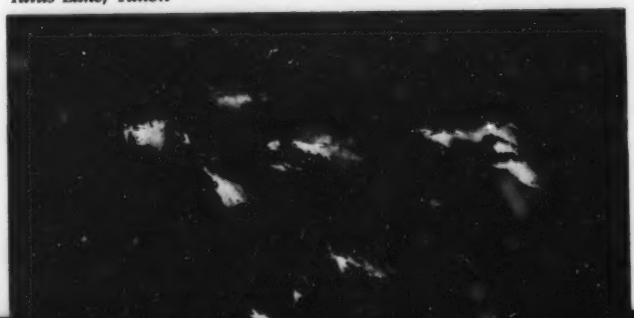
Work is in progress to prepare for protected area planning in the Arctic Circle/Eagle Plains region of northeast Yukon.

Resource assessment staff within the *Secretariat* are preparing the final draft of an ecoregion representation and ecological viability criteria paper slated for review this summer.

Planning work is also underway for **Horseshoe Slough**, **Nordenskiold** and **Lhutsaw Habitat Protection Areas**. All three areas have been identified through *First Nation Final Agreements* and are being established to protect specific habitat values. There are stipulated management principles which have been identified for each area based on the need to protect the habitat from activities which may reduce its capacity to support wildlife.

Ridgewalk, Yukon

Talus Lake, Yukon



CHALLENGES AND DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED

The adoption and implementation of a new strategy to protect special areas within the Yukon has met with some concerns. This does not come as a surprise, given this is our first year implementing the strategy.

Tombstone Territorial Park, Yukon

The Secretariat has identified areas for improvement and ongoing feedback will help us to refine the process with each successive project.

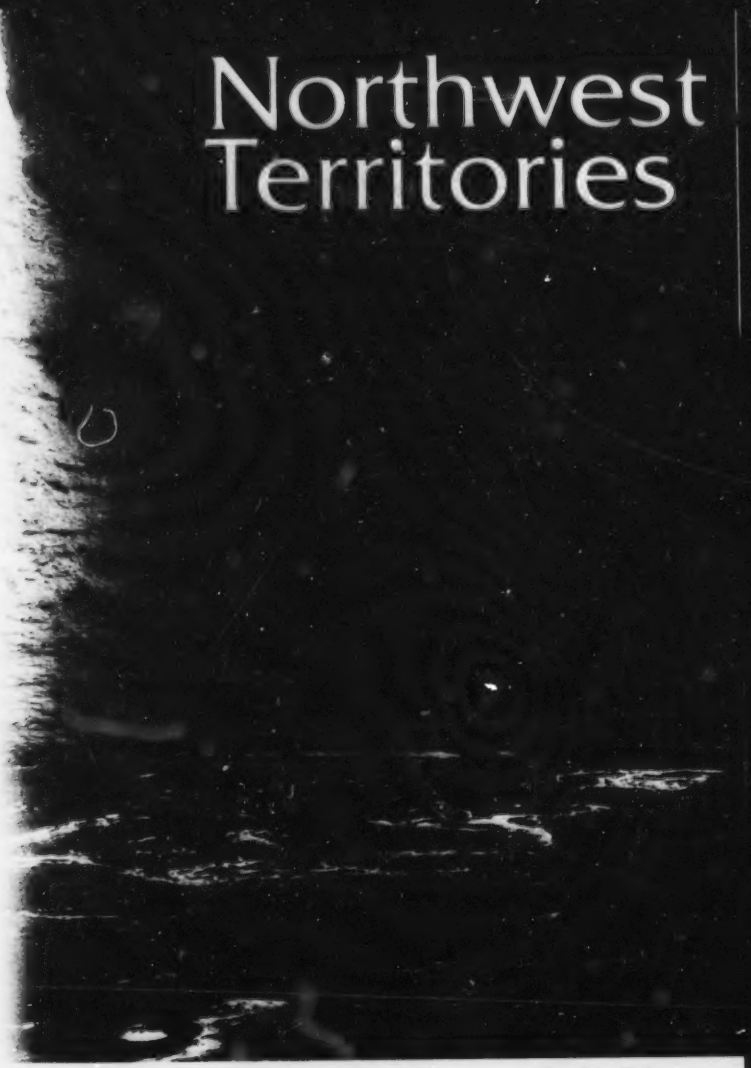
2000 TO FEATURE MORE CONCRETE ACTION

Initiatives underway or under consideration for 2000 and 2001 include: the designation of **Horseshoe Slough** and **Nordenskiold Habitat Protection Areas**, the identification of priority wetlands, the development and completion of management plans for **Lhutsaw and Needle Rock Habitat Protection Areas**, the establishment of a Local Planning Team for the northeast Yukon, the designation of the **Tatshenshini Heritage River**, the designation of **Tombstone Territorial Park** and **Fishing Branch Wilderness Preserve** under the *Parks Act*, the completion of *Parks Act* amendments, and ongoing work on land claim agreements and *Special Management Area* implementation.■

Lichens, Yukon

Caribou Bull, Yukon

Northwest Territories



Sambaa Deh Park, NWT

The Northwest Territories goals for protected areas are outlined in the approved NWT *Protected Areas Strategy - A Balanced Approach to Establishing Protected Areas in the Northwest Territories*. This *Strategy* is a partnership agreement between the Government of the Northwest Territories and the Government of Canada that was developed after extensive public consultations by an Advisory Committee made up of representatives from aboriginal organizations, environmental groups and industry. The foundation of the Strategy is the understanding that it will be community-based and that it provides guidance to protect both ecologically representative sites as well as cultural heritage areas. Our goals are:

- To protect special natural and cultural areas in the Northwest Territories.
- To protect core representative areas within each ecoregion of the Northwest Territories.

FRAMEWORK FOR PROTECTED AREAS

The *NWT Protected Areas Strategy* was approved by the Governments of the NWT and Canada in September 1999. What the *NWT Protected Areas Strategy* will do is described below:

- It will allow natural and cultural values to be represented in protected areas in the NWT.
- It will provide a more clearly defined context for resource development and conservation.
- It will reinforce the leadership role of communities, regional organizations and/or land claim bodies in land and water use management.
- It will help diminish concerns that future resource development may compromise the protection of special natural areas.
- It will help focus attention on the need for marine and freshwater protected areas.
- It will promote a more coordinated approach among organizations responsible for protected areas.

A community-based strategy to provide guidance to protect both ecologically representative sites as well as cultural heritage areas.

Blackstone Park, NWT

Falls —
e Park,
NWT

Falls —
e Park,
NWT

A *Protected Areas Secretariat* supported by both governments has been established to coordinate implementation and provide resource planning and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) technical support to community-based proponents of protected areas. The strategy sets out eight steps to be followed when establishing protected areas in the Northwest Territories. These are:

1. **Identify priority areas of interest** - The proponent community and/or regional organization should consult with residents to identify, document and evaluate potential sites.
2. **Prepare and review protected area proposal at regional level** - The proponent organization will prepare a preliminary proposal and submit it to the appropriate regional body for review and consideration.
3. **Review and submit proposal for candidate protected area status** - The preliminary proposal will be reviewed by the regional body which will then forward it to partnering/sponsoring government institutions for further evaluation and consultation.
4. **Consider/apply interim protection for candidate area** - The proponent organization will work with sponsoring government institutions to consider and where necessary, develop terms and conditions for interim protection.
5. **Evaluate candidate area** - The proponent organization will coordinate a detailed evaluation of the area's ecological, cultural and economic values. A public review will be part of the evaluation.
6. **Seek formal establishment of protected area** - The proponent organization will refine details and boundaries of the protected area to reflect the evaluation and the public review. A formal proposal will be submitted to government institutions. The government institutions will recommend that a protected area be established or that the proposal be revised.
7. **Approve and designate protected area** - Upon acceptance of the formal proposal by government, appropriate regional bodies and partners will co-sign and announce protected area establishment agreement.
8. **Implement, monitor and review protected area** - This will vary according to the type of protected area, land claims legislation and management regime.

A number of potential protected areas are now being discussed by community and regional organizations, with the *NWT Protected Areas Strategy* providing overall guidance. Areas of interest include the Horn Plateau, Mills Lake, Grizzly Bear Mountain, Scented Grass Hills and a boundary area near the Yukon in the Gwich'in settlement area. These areas will contribute to the representation of ecoregions in the Northwest Territories, as well as to the unique cultural heritage protection objectives of the *NWT Protected Areas Strategy*.

The *Protected Areas Secretariat* has recently completed a NWT ecoregion/landscape unit base map that will guide establishment of protected areas. The *PA Secretariat* is

now in the process of coordinating the addition of resource and land use information layers to the GIS database. This information will assist local decision-makers and planners to identify the "best" representative areas for protected area establishment in a manner that minimizes conflict with existing or potential economic activities.

Challenges facing the protected area program will continue to be the unsettled land claims in the southern NWT and the limited dedicated resources available for implementation.

THE PROGRESS CONTINUES

The formation of a *Protected Area Implementation Advisory Group* that includes Aboriginal, environmental and industry groups will be pursued in 2000. This public committee will help guide implementation and act as a sounding board for public opinion.

The federal and territorial governments are working with Aboriginal organizations as well as various stakeholders on a number of topics to advance protected area establishment. These include:

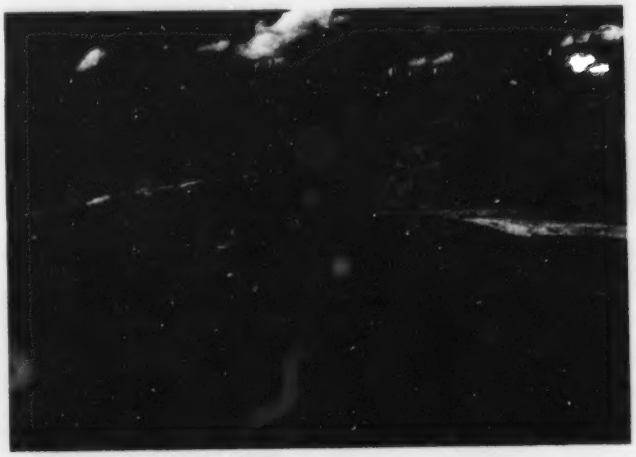
- Legislation and regulations to match the needs and priorities of communities, regional organizations and/or land claim bodies as they relate to the PAS are being reviewed and revised.
- Coordination and cooperation between government institutions with responsibilities for terrestrial and marine protected areas is being strengthened.
- Science-based technical support is being provided for the identification and evaluation of potential protected area sites.
- A mineral and energy resource assessment process is being addressed.
- Guidelines for the application of interim protection measures for candidate protected areas are being reviewed.
- Third party compensation guidelines are being assessed in consultation with the PAS partners.

Preliminary results of investigations recommend that the *Territorial Parks Act* should be revised to allow for a new park category that provides high levels of surface and sub-surface protection to designated land areas. New territorial parks are likely to play a major role in providing protection to representative ecological and heritage areas in the new millennium.

The collection and analysis of GIS information with recently developed computer-modeling tools will be utilized to assist in the selection of representative ecological areas and the identification of gaps in NWT ecoregion representation.

The NWT perceives the establishment of protected areas as a conservation component of regional land use planning processes which are essential to integrated resource management planning. To achieve the goals of the *NWT*

Twin Falls Gorge Park, NWT



Lady Evelyn Falls Park, NWT

Hidden Lake Park, NWT

Strategy, protected areas will not be planned and managed as isolated "islands" of nature. In some cases protected areas must be linked with mechanisms such as buffer zones or corridors to ensure ecological integrity is maintained. The relationship between protected areas and surrounding lands and waters should be considered so that management regimes for both protected areas and adjacent lands can be harmonized for their mutual benefit. The creative application of standard land use regulations can often promote such compatibility.

The process of developing the "community-based" *NWT Protected Areas Strategy* has clearly shown that there is much we can learn from each other's goals, values, skills, technology and experience. During the implementation phase of the PAS, we hope that this shared knowledge will continue. We also hope that this experience will lead to shared management agreements between communities and various levels of governments that result in the establishment of new, publicly supported protected areas in the NWT.

Our challenge now is to take this *Strategy* and build upon these initial recommendations so that in the future we can still say we have *"wild spaces and heritage places"*.■

Sambaa Deh Park, NWT

Lady Evelyn Falls Park, NWT

Nunavut

Residents of Nunavut are proud of their natural and cultural heritage, their strong relationship to their diverse landscape and its resources, their communities, their wildlife, and their rich and important history. Nunavut's Parks and Conservation Areas not only highlight and protect these significant areas, but they celebrate and proudly showcase them - locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally.

Nunavut, which means "our land", was formed by an act of Parliament on April 1, 1999. It is more than one-fifth the size of Canada and contains more than two-thirds of its shoreline. Since the **Thelon Wildlife Sanctuary** was first recommended for protection almost a century ago for its wildlife and aesthetic beauty, over 30 million hectares of Parks and Conservation Areas have been protected in Nunavut - an area more than twice the size of the provinces of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island combined, or about half the size of the province of Alberta.

Although Nunavut did not exist in 1992 when Canada's federal, provincial and territorial parks ministers committed to completing *Canada's Networks of Protected Areas*, perhaps there is no stronger commitment than in Nunavut. Nowhere else in Canada are there so many vast, pristine and unaltered lands, wild rivers, or unique and significant wildlife and flora protected; or such a demonstrated relationship with the land and its resources — a respect stronger than any lines on a map can create.

Looking towards Bylot Island Migratory Bird Sanctuary and Sirmilik National Park, Nunavut

PROTECTED AREA PRINCIPLES PREDATE NUNAVUT'S CREATION

The 1993 *Nunavut Land Claim Agreement (NLCA)* changed the roles of government in the protection of Nunavut's environment. This agreement recognizes the value and desirability of Parks and Conservation Areas, and further defines an approach to the establishment of protected areas within Nunavut - which includes meaningful community involvement, management, and impact and benefit measures related to protected areas. Meeting these obligations must be completed prior to the consideration of a strategy for protected areas, and is a necessary first step in formally establishing existing and proposed *Parks and Conservation Areas*.

Nowhere else in Canada are there so many vast, pristine and unaltered lands, wild rivers, or unique and significant wildlife and flora protected...

Iceberg drifting at Pond Inlet, Nunavut

During the land selection process for Nunavut, over 22.5 million hectares of lands (almost 11% of Nunavut) were set aside for Territorial and National Parks, and Conservation Areas, including Migratory Bird Sanctuaries, Wildlife Sanctuaries, and National Wildlife Areas. The NLCA also identified an additional 7.2 million hectares (an additional 3.4% of Nunavut) for proposed protected areas. The Government of Nunavut continues to work closely with *Parks Canada*, the *Canadian Wildlife Service* and the communities of Nunavut in developing these proposed areas into National and Territorial Parks and Wildlife Areas. Including all proposed protected areas, almost 30 million hectares - over 14% of Nunavut's 210-million hectare land base is under protection.

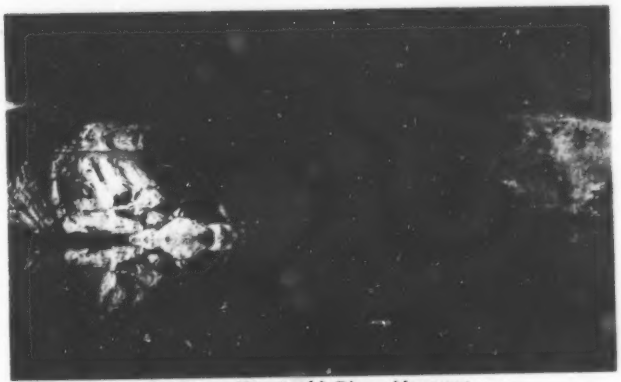
In addition, Nunavut has also established strong Wildlife Management programs with its communities. The identification of *Critical Wildlife Areas* helps to ensure the continued protection and conservation of polar bears and caribou in keeping with scientific and traditional knowledge of wildlife habits. These programs respond to wildlife conservation needs and patterns and provide levels of protection beyond formal area designations. These, and other protected areas are also included in regional land use planning initiatives in Nunavut which recognizes the desire for completing a region-wide protected areas system and supports the protection of critical habitat, wildlife management, and certain representative areas through conservation and protected area designations.

Kekerten Park, Nunavut

Nunavut

The *Department of Sustainable Development (DSD)*, through the *Parks and Tourism Division*, and the *Wildlife and Fisheries Division*, is responsible for parks, tourism, wildlife management, economic development and other matters related to activities on the land, and how people use and benefit from this resource in Nunavut. DSD recognizes stewardship of the natural environment as a responsibility shared with everyone in Nunavut - perhaps best exemplified by the strong relationship the Inuit have with the land and its resources.

In keeping with these objectives, and recognizing the distinct differences between Nunavut and other jurisdictions, the Government of Nunavut has committed to the development of a *Nunavut Park Program* to identify the roles and values of Parks and Conservation Areas in and for the territory. The program will review the relationships between existing National and Territorial Parks and Conservation Areas in Nunavut, Heritage Rivers and other proposed measures such as Marine Conservation Areas. This Program will be followed by the creation of a *Parks and Conservation Areas System Plan* and related changes to parks legislation and policy to guide future development of Parks and Conservation Areas in Nunavut. It is anticipated that a *Protected Areas Strategy* will be developed within this context.



Soper Lake on the Soper (Kuujuak) River, Nunavut

Thelon River, in Thelon Wildlife Sanctuary, Nunavut

Kayak sunset at Pond Inlet, Nunavut

ACTION FOR THE FUTURE

Including all of its islands, Nunavut contains almost two-thirds of Canada's shoreline. The nine Arctic *National Marine Conservation Area* regions are all found in Nunavut. However, even with such a vast, varied and productive marine system ranging from steep fjords, cliffs and ice-sculpted shorelines, to headlands, lowlands, tidal flats, polynyas, and permanent ice fields, there are currently no marine protected areas in Nunavut. Nunavut must consider the development of appropriate *Marine Protected Areas* with its federal partners in keeping with the Nunavut Land Claim obligations.

Nunavut shares its wildlife and habitats with its circumpolar neighbours including Greenland and the Northwest Territories. For this reason, it is important that Nunavut continues to participate in circumpolar protected areas activities initiatives through the sharing of knowledge and resource management.

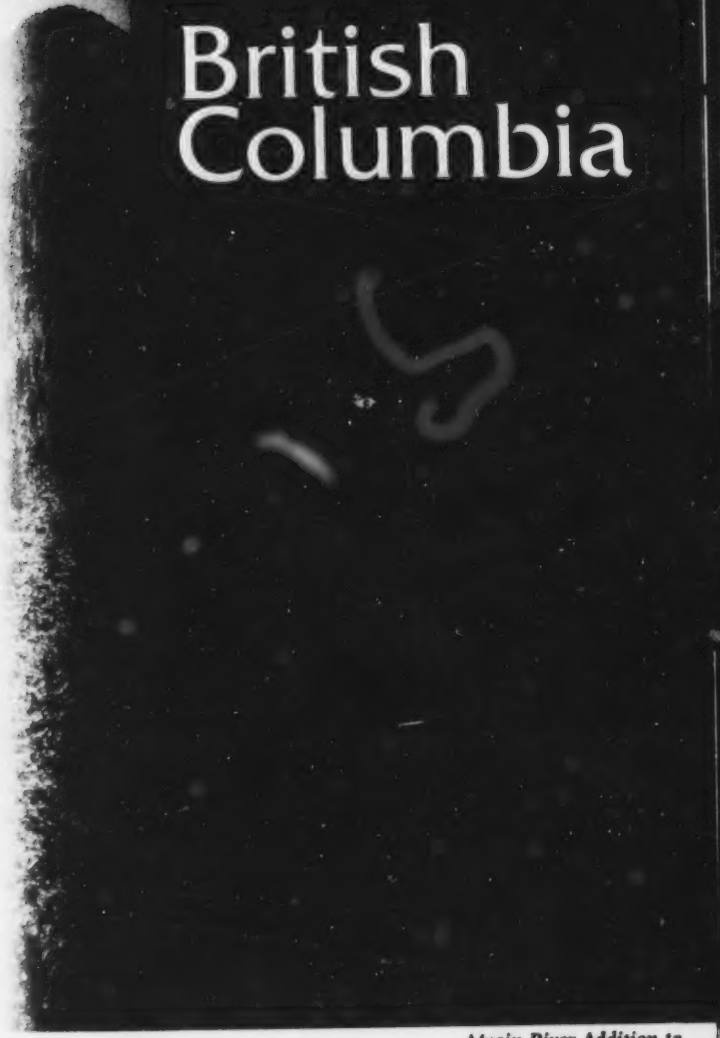
While there continues to be interest in enhancing Nunavut's Protected Areas, it is within the context and priorities identified in the *Nunavut Land Claim Agreement*. The Nunavut Government has started the park planning process through the development of a *Park Program*, *Park System Plan*, revisions to Nunavut *Parks Legislation and Policy*, and the establishment of strong wildlife management programs. Collectively, these initiatives will provide the basis for protected areas planning and development, and will provide the community and industry support and interest necessary for a successful *Nunavut Protected Areas Strategy* that begins to look at outstanding needs in a systematic manner.

The Government of Nunavut is highly optimistic that its people's traditional, centuries-old respect and care for their natural environment has and will continue to translate into meaningful action and the permanent protection of *"our land"*.■

Itijagiak Trail in Soper Valley, Katannilik Park, Nunavut

Thelon River, Thelon Wildlife Sanctuary, Nunavut

British Columbia



Megin River Addition to Strathcona Park, BC

In June 1993, the Government of British Columbia released *A Protected Areas Strategy* for British Columbia which, as its title implied, set out the government's plans for protected areas within its overall land use strategy. The goal, in keeping with the 1992 *Statement of Commitment to Complete Canada's Networks of Protected Areas*, was to designate and manage, by the year 2000, a system of protected areas which protected a diversity of natural, cultural heritage and recreational values encompassing a full 12% of the province's land base.

Protected areas are defined as:

"land, freshwater or marine areas set aside to protect the province's diverse natural and cultural heritage. They are dedicated to present and future generations for a spectrum of compatible uses: as scientific benchmarks, as nature preserves, as places for education, appreciation and inspiration, and as places to enjoy certain recreation activities.

Protected areas are inalienable: the land and resources may not be sold.

They are also areas in which no industrial resource extraction or development is permitted. No mining, logging, hydro dams or oil and gas development will occur within protected areas."

The twin goals of the *Protected Areas Strategy* are:

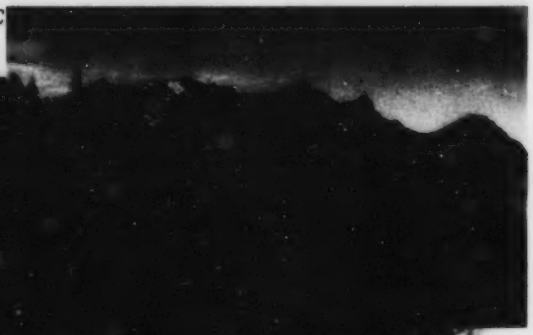
- to protect viable, representative examples of the natural diversity in the province, representative of the major terrestrial, marine and freshwater ecosystems, the characteristic habitats, hydrology and landforms and the characteristic backcountry recreational and cultural heritage values of each ecosection; and
- to protect the special natural, cultural heritage and recreational features of the province, including rare and endangered species and critical habitats, outstanding or unique botanical, zoological, geological and paleontological features, outstanding or fragile cultural heritage features, and outstanding outdoor recreational features such as trails.

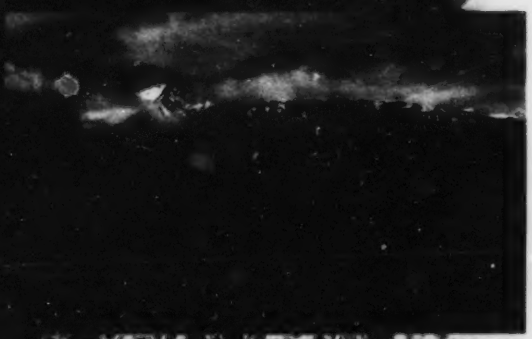
The *Protected Areas Strategy* establishes the concept of ecosystem representation as the fundamental premise guiding the identification and selection of new protected areas. The ecoregions (based primarily on landforms and climate) and biogeoclimatic (based primarily on climate, soils and vegetation) ecological classification frameworks serve as the system planning tools for the terrestrial protected areas system. The ecoregions framework is used to divide the province into 100 terrestrial ecosections. As the ecosections themselves are ecologically heterogeneous, with different major vegetation types distributed along elevational gradients, the biogeoclimatic system is used to delineate those ecosystems within terrestrial ecosections. Fourteen biogeoclimatic zones occur, usually characterized by one or more dominant tree species, which are divided into subzones and variants. The broad objective is to protect a representative sample of the major occurrences of the biogeoclimatic subzones and variants in each ecosection.

Protected areas are inalienable: the land and resources may not be sold.

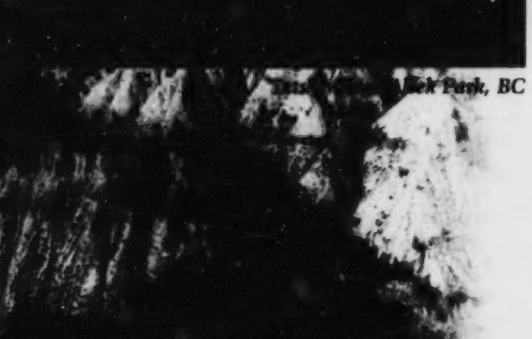
God's Pocket Marine Park, BC

Kakwa Park, BC





Tats[illegible]ek Park, BC



BC Parks is working with other provincial and federal agencies to develop a marine protected areas strategy fo the Pacific coast of Canada. In August 1998, a discussion paper entitled *Marine Protected Areas - A Strategy fo Canada's Pacific Coast*, was released which proposed the goal of creating "a system of marine protected areas on the Pacific coast of Canada by 2010".

To guide provincial marine protected area system planning efforts, twelve marine ecosections have been identified. Six hundred and twenty broad ecologically homogeneous habitat units, each composed of similar marin attributes and features such as depth, current, seabed type, key organism types and biological community dynamics/structure, within these ecosections have been identified and are currently being field-tested.

BRITISH COLUMBIA PROTECTS OVER 11% OF THE PROVINCE

Since the signing of the *Statement of Commitment to Complete Canada's Networks of Protected Areas* in November 1992, there has been an unprecedented rate of protected area establishment in British Columbia.

More than 325 new protected areas or additions to exis ing protected areas totalling approximately 4.72 millio hectares have been established or announced since November 1992. Many of these new parks protect resources of national and even global significance. Som 11.36% of the province (more than 10.76 million hectares) is now dedicated to protected area status, up from 6.3% in 1992 and only marginally short of our 12% goal.

Also, more than 400,000 hectares in recreation areas and wilderness areas have been "upgraded" to Class "A park status. In addition, 37 of the new parks or additions to new parks since November 1992 include marin waters totalling 26,630 hectares.

Tatshenshini-Alsek Park, encompassing 947,026 hectares, protects an area internationally recognized fo its outstanding and significant wildlife, biodiversity an wilderness recreation values. Among these values are a rich diversity of vegetation, including many rare plants. The park is one of the last strongholds of both North America's grizzly bear population and the "blue" or "glacier" bear, (a colour phase of the black bear), which is found nowhere else in Canada. **Tatshenshini-Alsek** i also home to about one-half of BC's Dall sheep popula tion and it offers outstanding river rafting opportunitie as the Tatshenshini is considered the "wildest" river in North America. The park plays a major role in creating the largest international protected area in the world, approximately 8.5 million hectares.

Additionally, **Tatshenshini-Alsek** provides an essential link between Glacier Bay and St. Elias national parks in Alaska, and **Kluane National Park** in the Yukon. Each of these protected areas has been designated a World Heritage Site.

[illegible]n Creek Protected Area, BC

In 1997, the **Muskwa-Kechika Management Area** was established. This globally renowned wilderness area comprises 4.4 million hectares of special management zones and protected areas. Few other places in the world match the features of the Muskwa-Kechika area in terms of species groupings, population densities, remoteness and minimal development.

The **Upper Carmanah Valley** and the **Walbran Valley** were added to **Carmanah Pacific Provincial Park** to create the new **Carmanah Walbran Park** (16,450 hectares). This addition completes the preservation of the Carmanah Creek watershed, protecting an entire primary watershed on the west coast of Vancouver Island. The park possesses high old-growth forest biodiversity values, Sitka spruce forests and marbled murrelet habitat.

Tahsish-Kwois Park (10,829 hectares), **Hesquiat Peninsula Park** (7,899 hectares), **Clayoquot Arm Park** (3,491 hectares) and the **Megin watershed addition** (27,390 hectares) to **Strathcona Park** also protect spectacular temperate rainforests on Vancouver Island.

Churn Creek Protected Area (24,368 hectares) protects rare and nationally significant grasslands and important wildlife values while providing recreational opportunities.

Kitlope Heritage Conservancy Park was protected in 1994 through an agreement between the provincial government, the Haisla First Nation and the West Fraser Timber Company, which voluntarily forfeited its rights to log in the valley without seeking compensation. This area, encompassing 317,291 hectares on the central coast, is truly an outstanding site, protecting to be what is believed to be the world's largest intact coastal temperate rainforest. This protected area is successfully being managed jointly by the Haisla and BC Parks.

The **Khutzeymateen Park** (44,902 ha) protects the largest known concentration of grizzlies along the British Columbia coast and is the first grizzly bear sanctuary in Canada.

Since the signing of the *Statement of Commitment*, significant progress has been made in improving representation of all of the province's major terrestrial ecosystem types. More specifically, during this time period, the number of terrestrial ecosections with no or little representation (<1%) has been reduced from fifty-three to sixteen and the number of ecosections with high levels of representation (>8%) has increased from twenty-four to forty-one. Marine ecosystems are, for the most part, poorly represented in the protected areas system. Approximately 1% of the marine environment is in protected area status. This number must and will improve.

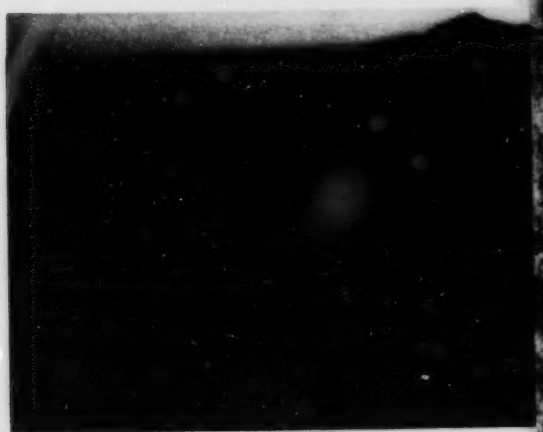
Strategic land use plans are the principal mechanism for reaching decisions on new protected areas. Fourteen land use plans have been completed covering about 56% of the province. Another eight land use plans are in various stages of completion, covering another 24% of the province.

Land use plans are prepared through a process involving all stakeholders using a consensus-seeking approach based on interest-based negotiation. The planning tables do not always recommend areas that respond precisely to gaps in representation. In selecting new protected areas, government must take into consideration the needs and wishes of local communities, socio-economic implications of decisions, in addition to ecological considerations.

Some ecosystems, such as those in the Lower Mainland area and on the east coast of Vancouver Island, have been heavily disturbed and fragmented, resulting in limited protected area opportunities.

Tatshenshini-Alsek Park, BC

Walbran, BC



Upper Carmanah, BC

THE ROAD AHEAD

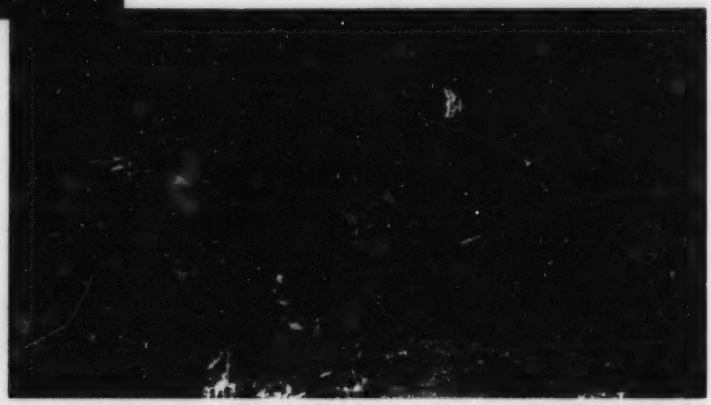
Several gaps remain in meeting terrestrial ecosystem representation objectives. For example, 16% of terrestrial ecosections have less than 1% of their area dedicated to protected area status. Similarly, ecosystems such as ponderosa pine, coastal Douglas-fir, interior Douglas-fir and sub-boreal spruce zones, remain under-represented. Eight land use planning processes are presently underway and each of the resultant plans will recommend new protected areas that will respond to gaps in ecosystem representation.

Land use plans for the remainder of the province will be initiated as current land use planning processes conclude and planning tables make their recommendations and as stakeholders, sector representatives and government staff and financial resources become available.

For several understandable reasons, marine protected area initiatives lag considerably behind terrestrial protected areas. Clearly, initiating the marine protected areas strategy, which brings together protected area and fisheries agencies from both the federal and provincial governments, has resulted in increased cooperation between agencies. Unquestionably, however, more effort is needed to ensure that individual programs are delivered in a coordinated and focussed manner. There is still a sense of uncertainty among the public, marine scientists, many stakeholder groups and governments about what, specifically, marine protected areas are, how they work and how well they work. Building awareness and information among all marine interests will be critical to realize the marine protected areas vision.

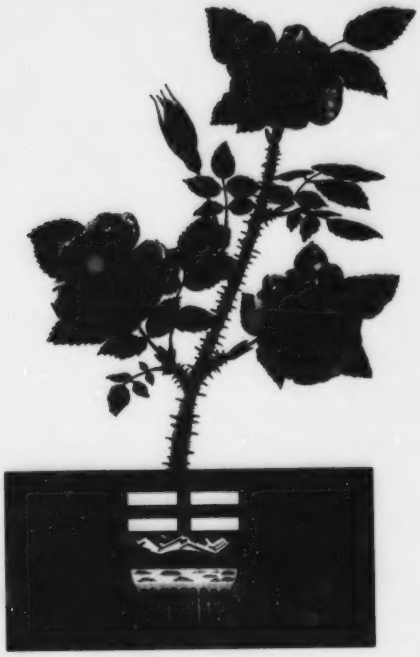
It is not an understatement to suggest that British Columbia's environmental diversity is unparalleled in Canada. The country's Pacific coast is unique and treasured by visitors and residents alike. The Government and the many stakeholders involved in protecting British Columbia's natural ecosystems and features have taken significant steps to ensure that much of the province's biological significance and importance are safeguarded for generations. Future actions must ensure that the protected areas vision, both for marine and terrestrial areas, is realized and achieved.■

Khutzeymateen Park, BC



Nahwitti-Shushartie addition to Cape Scott Park, BC

Alberta



K. Sloman

Bob Creek Wildland, Alberta

The vision of Alberta's protected areas initiative - known as *"Special Places"* — is to complete a network of protected areas that preserves the environmental diversity of the province's six Natural Regions. To the extent that they are compatible with the preservation goal, Alberta's protected areas network will satisfy goals for heritage appreciation, outdoor recreation and heritage tourism.

To satisfy all four goals of its *Special Places* initiative, Alberta has set an overall target of 8,100,000 hectares for protected areas in the province, including national parks. Progress toward achieving the preservation goal is based on reaching targets for 167 distinctive landscapes or Natural History Themes that further define the environmental diversity of the Natural Regions.

Since signing the 1992 *Statement of Commitment*, more than 650,000 hectares have been added to the network. Protected areas in Alberta, including national parks, now exceed 6,950,000 hectares or about 10.5% of the province. Over 60% of the Natural History Theme targets for Alberta have been met.

SPECIAL PLACES TOUCHES THE ENTIRE PROVINCE

Special Places has broadened the environmental diversity preserved within the network, and secured new opportunities. The network can now support the full range of opportunities and features expected of a world-class parks and protected areas system: preservation, heritage appreciation, outdoor recreation and heritage tourism.

New parks and protected areas provide wilderness settings for nature-based ecotourism. Albertans and visitors from across the country and around the world can now experience and learn about the full range of unique landscapes in the province.

CANADIAN SHIELD NATURAL REGION

From just two small Ecological Reserves in 1992, preservation within the Canadian Shield has increased to represent the considerable diversity of the Natural Region. Based on the recommendations of a local committee consisting of NGOs, industry, local government officials and First Nation representatives, six more Wildlands totalling over 170,000 hectares have been established.

Colin-Cornwall Lakes, the largest of these Wildlands at 70,000 hectares, is exceptionally diverse. Along with the rugged granite outcrops and deep clear lakes typical of the Canadian Shield, extensive sand and gravel outwash plains and wetland complexes provide habitats for provincially rare species. Preliminary field studies have documented rare plants for the unique south-facing grasslands. Provincially rare birds, such as the Mew Gull and Semipalmated Plover, nest on Colin Lake while Bald Eagles and Osprey are common.

The 18,000-hectare **La Butte Creek Wildland** was selected to protect a large stream flowing from the Canadian Shield into the Slave River.

Almost 60% of the Natural History Theme targets for Alberta have been met.

The largest sand dune complex in Canada is found south of Lake Athabasca. **Richardson River Dunes Wildland** preserves the best of the paleo-longitudinal dunes. Formed soon after the glaciers' retreat by winds from the southeast, longitudinal dunes of this type, size and development are not evident anywhere else in the world. **Fidler-Greywillow Wildland** preserves a portion of the north shore of Lake Athabasca and the islands in the lake. Bustard Island, with its scenic storm beaches and driftwood, is the largest sand island in the province. White spruce and lichen communities, active blowout dunes and outcrops of the Athabasca sandstone typify the north shore.

Maybelle River Wildland surrounds **Athabasca Dunes Ecological Reserve.** The Ecological Reserve preserves an area of active sand dunes and provincially rare plants including linear-leaved sundew, pitcher plants, stemless lady's-slipper and horned bladderwort. The wildland preserves stabilized dunes, fluted and drumlinized outwash plains and rugged kames.

Marguerite Crag and Tail Wildland preserves a unique landscape; the only crag and tail terrain in the province. Craggy granite knolls are the southernmost outcrops of the Canadian Shield in Alberta. Glacial debris deposited on the lee side of the crags form the tails. Ponds and wetlands separate the crag and tail landforms. The wildland supports disjunct Canadian Shield plants and rock polypody, a rare fern has been recorded here.

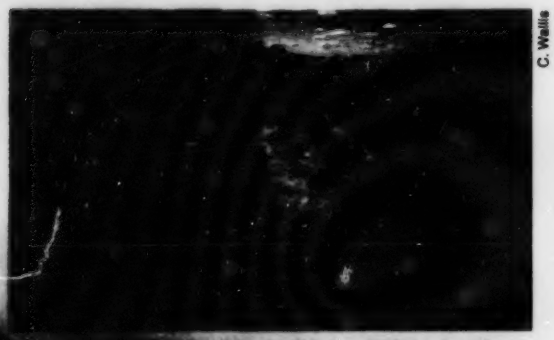
ROCKY MOUNTAIN NATURAL REGION

The Rocky Mountain Natural Region has been well represented within National Parks, Wilderness Areas and other protected areas for many years. *Special Places* has preserved more of this scenic and ecologically diverse Region. Four Wildland Parks totalling over 180,000 hectares have been established. **Whitehorse Wildland** adjacent to **Jasper National Park** has received the most attention. The 17,400-hectare wildland preserves critical habitat for grizzly bear, bighorn sheep and Harlequin ducks. Many rare alpine plants have also been documented here. **Cadomin Caves** are an important bat habitat with reports of up to 30,000 bats visiting the caves annually. An estimated 1,000 Little Brown bats hibernate in the caves while long legged, northern long eared and long eared bats are also regular visitors. To protect the bats, the caves are closed to the public from September to April. Education programs also discourage visitation in August from one hour before sunset until one hour after sunrise.

Elbow-Sheep Wildland at 80,000 hectares encompasses a diverse landscape of open grassy slopes, dense forests of spruce, fir and pine, deep valleys and rocky mountain peaks. The combination of diverse terrain and vegetation produces spectacular scenery and creates prime habitat for elk, mountain sheep, cougar, grizzly bear and mountain goats. **Elbow-Sheep Wildland** is one of the finest trail riding areas in Alberta.

Kakwa Wildland on the northern boundary of **Willmore Wilderness Park** and adjacent to **Kakwa Park** in British Columbia preserves an additional 35,000 hectares of wilderness. Woodland caribou, elk, bighorn sheep, mountain goat, moose, black bear, grizzly bear, wolf and wolverine are among the diverse wildlife. Streams support arctic grayling, bull trout, cutthroat and rainbow trout. **Kakwa Wildland** and the adjoining protected areas offer a pristine setting for visitors seeking wilderness without maintained trails and backcountry facilities.

Bow Valley Wildland straddling the TransCanada Highway east of **Banff National Park** is a tribute to the dedication and determination of a *Special Places* Local Committee. The Local Committee made up of area residents representing the mining and tourism industry, local governments, land developers, wildlife science and the environmental community worked through innumerable issues. The diverse interests on the committee reached a common understanding that the Bow Valley is a critical corridor for regional wildlife movement and serves as a vital ecological link between



C. Wallis

C. Wallis

Cornwall Lakes Wildland, Alberta

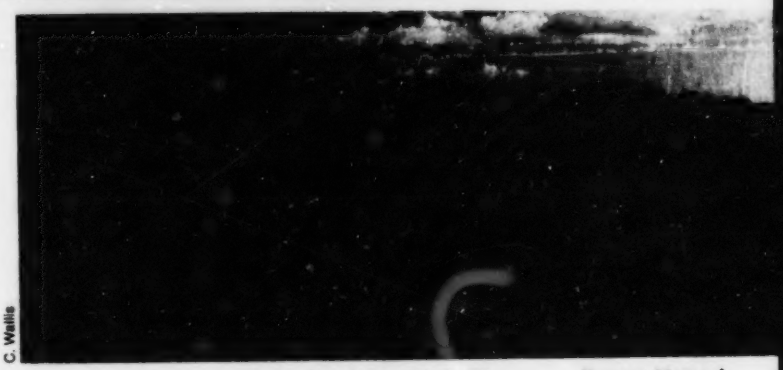
K. Stoman

Alberta

Willow
Alberta

C. Wallis

Bob Creek Wildland, Alberta



C. Wallis

Rumsey Natural Area, Alberta

Banff National Park, the Kananaskis Valley and the Ghost and Spray watersheds. Elk, deer, mountain sheep, black bear, grizzly bear, cougar and wolf are among the many species that benefit by the ecological connections preserved within **Bow Valley Wildland**.

One of the most noteworthy accomplishments of *Special Places* is the designation of over 30,000 hectares in an area known as the **Whaleback**. The largest undisturbed montane landscape in Alberta is now preserved in **Bob Creek Wildland** and **Black Creek Heritage Rangeland**. A series of spine-like ridges, the landscape of the **Whaleback** alternates between open grasslands and forests of pine, spruce, fir and aspen. Limber pine over 575 years old and 400-year old Douglas fir have been recorded. The snow free, Chinook- swept grasslands are winter range for mule deer and Alberta's largest elk herd while the list of predators includes cougar, wolf and grizzly bear. Over 80 species of birds including golden eagle nest in the wildland and many rare plants have been recorded. With the co-operation of industry, the **Whaleback** is permanently preserved free of mining, oil and gas development and logging. Forestry tenures were relinquished and oil and gas rights donated to the *Nature Conservancy of Canada*. Grazing lessees also supported inclusion of their leases in the protected areas.

FOOTHILLS NATURAL REGION

Prior to *Special Places*, less than 10% of the targets had been protected for the **Foothills Natural Region**. **Chinchaga Wildland** (80,300 hectares) and **Grizzly Ridge Wildland** (10,700 hectares) have made major contributions to filling these shortfalls. Approximately 80% of the targets have been met for the Lower Foothills and 25% for the Upper Foothills. Dotted with small lakes the **Chinchaga** is used by nesting trumpeter swans and is habitat for woodland caribou and grizzly bear. **Grizzly Ridge Wildland** straddling the rugged escarpment of the Swan Hills is a forested landscape of slump blocks, springs and the headwaters of local streams. Disjunct populations of Rocky Mountain plants are common in this site which is near the eastern limit of the Foothills.

PARKLAND AND GRASSLAND NATURAL REGIONS

Progress is also being made in the **Parkland and Grassland Natural Regions**. **Beaverhill Lake Heritage Rangeland** (17,500 hectares), **Killarney-Reflex Lakes Heritage Rangeland** (2,700 hectares) and **Ribstone Creek Heritage Rangeland** (8,300 hectares) have increased the contribution to the targets for Central Parkland from less than 10% to almost 25%. **Beaverhill Lake**, a renowned birding area, has documented over 250 species with 145 species known to have nested here. During fall migrations more than 200,000 ducks, geese and swans have been recorded at one time. The annual *Snow Goose Festival* attracts about 6,000 people for the 2-day event. **Big Lake Natural Area** although only 1,100 hectares is one of most significant waterfowl lakes in Alberta. Supporting a large nesting colony of Franklin's gulls, migrating flocks of tundra swans and a diversity of nesting and migrating waterfowl and shorebirds, **Big lake** was recently recognized as a *Globally Significant Important Bird Area*. Adjacent to the cities of Edmonton and Saint Albert the value of **Big Lake Natural Area** for education and nature appreciation is substantial.

The 14,900-hectare **Rumsey Natural Area**, adjacent to the existing 3,400-hectare **Rumsey Ecological Reserve**, protects the largest remaining tract of Aspen Parkland in Canada. The Aspen Parkland, a landscape unique to the Prairie Provinces, is some of the country's most productive agricultural land and little remains in a natural condition. Rumsey is an area of hummocky moraine or knob and kettle topography. In wetter years the kettles fill with water and the resulting pothole country becomes some of the most productive waterfowl habitat in North America. Spanning the transition from the Northern Fescue Grassland to the Central Parkland, Rumsey protects plants, birds and mammals at either the northern or southern extent of their range.

Twin River Heritage Rangeland (19,000 hectares) has increased protection in the Mixed grass sub region to over 60% of the targets from a mere 1%. **Twin River** preserves much of the diversity of this sub region. Birds of prey: ferruginous hawk, golden eagle and prairie falcon are frequent nesters. Rare fish: mottled sculpin, stonecat and finescale dace are found in the rivers. Rare plants include prickly mild vetch, tufted hymenopappus and carolina whitlowgrass. Yellow-bellied marmot and leopard frogs, both provincially rare, inhabit the site.

BOREAL FOREST NATURAL REGION

Prior to *Special Places*, targets had already been achieved for one of the six Boreal Forest Sub regions, that being the **Peace River Lowlands**, much of which is within **Wood Buffalo National Park**.

The 48,600-hectare **Hay-Zama Lakes Wildland** increased protection in the Wetland Mixed wood Boreal Forest to 90% of the target. A series of eutrophic lakes, floodplains and river deltas, Hay-Zama is also a Ramsar

New Wildlands provide wilderness settings for nature-based ecotourism.

C. Wallis

Hay-Zama Lakes Wildland, Alberta

site, that is, a wetland of internationally significance due to its importance for migrating waterfowl. During the fall migration, 130,000 lesser snow geese, 47,000 Canada geese and 200,000 ducks have been recorded. An agreement between the *Dene Tha' First Nations*, environmental groups, the petroleum industry and the Alberta Government will see oil reserves depleted and wells reclaimed over the next few years.

Holmes Crossing Sandhills Ecological Reserve and nearby **Fort Assiniboine Sandhills Wildland**, in the Central Mixed wood Boreal Forest, preserve a stabilized sand dune and fen complex as well as old growth forests. The forests harbour species such as pileated woodpeckers, various wood warblers and flying squirrels that favour old growth; sandhill cranes nest in the fens. The largest transverse dune ridges in Canada are also preserved. **La Biche River Wildland** has increased protection in the Dry Mixedwood Boreal Forest to 40% of the target.

LOOKING FORWARD

Work is ongoing. Local committees continue to review candidate sites. Competing land use is the biggest challenge. Decades ago, much of the **Foothills and Boreal Forest Natural Regions** were allocated to the forest and petroleum industries. Progress in reclaiming and protecting these Natural Regions is dependent upon the goodwill of industry. Amicable and productive negotiations continue as the basis for achieving mutually agreeable solutions so that new protected areas are free of industrial development. If the past decade's experience in Alberta is any indication, considerably more progress toward achieving the targets is anticipated with further designations in the near future.

Crown-owned land in the **Grassland and Parkland Natural Regions** has a lengthy history of use for grazing of domestic livestock. Protected areas legislation has recently been amended to provide more certainty to the public, industry and lessees. Traditional resistance to protected areas in the **Grasslands and Parkland** is being overcome, in part, by the creation of a class of protected areas that safeguards the interests and extends the tenure of grazing lessees if they demonstrate responsible stewardship of the land. More co-operatively protected areas in these Natural Regions are anticipated.

Biophysical inventories are planned for the new protected areas in the coming years while management plans focused on preserving long-term ecological integrity will be prepared. Continuing the province's consultative approach, these management plans will have the benefit of public input and will be based on the best available information.

Alberta's natural beauty is one of its greatest assets. Each new acre of parkland secures this for future generations to experience, enjoy and learn about our province's natural heritage. ■

Alberta's natural beauty is one of its greatest assets.

C. Wershler

Fort Assiniboine Dunes Wildland, Alberta

Saskatchewan

Lower Armit River, Porcupine Hills, Saskatchewan

Parks and protected areas in Saskatchewan include both representative and unique features or topography as well as lands with recreational, cultural and historical values. The ruggedness of Wildcat Hill Wilderness Park; the prominent hills and lodgepole pine of Cypress Hills Interprovincial Park; the vast dunes of Athabasca Sand Dunes Wilderness Park; the pictures left by ancient peoples in the stone of St. Victor Petroglyphs; the history of Fort Carlton; the recreation opportunities and beauty of the Qu'Appelle, Saskatchewan and Clearwater River Valleys — all of these and many other features are awe-inspiring and well worth preserving through their designations as provincial parks.

As well, through agreements with a number of agencies, creation of new ecological reserves, and the presence of two national parks, the system of protected areas also includes the prairie grasslands of southern Saskatchewan, the rolling hills of the parkland belt, the marshes and muskeg of the boreal lowlands, the aspen, birch and pine forests of the uplands and boreal shield. Soon the subarctic tundra and Precambrian rocks of the northern-most taiga shield will also be represented.

A DECADE OF PROGRESS

At the beginning of the last decade of the 20th century, the province released its *Parks System Plan* that has served as a guide and blueprint for establishing new protected lands in unrepresented areas. In 1992, there were approximately 1.8 million hectares protected under various designations in *The World Conservation Union (IUCN)* categories I to IV.

A poster map of the ecoregions of Saskatchewan released in 1994 and a subsequent explanatory report and CD, which were widely distributed to schools around the province, provided a new basis for thinking about representation of the province's landscape and biodiversity. It classified the province into four ecozones consisting of eleven ecoregions and more than 150 Landscape Areas. These zones of soils and vegetation types reflect the effects of climate over the last 10,000 years on the landscape left by the retreating glaciers.

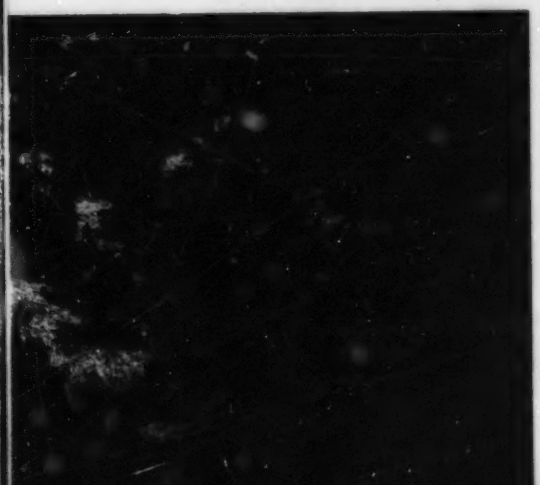
In 1997, Saskatchewan unveiled its *Representative Areas Network (RAN)* initiative which considered almost three million hectares of lands protected as provincial parks, national parks, wildlife refuges, ecological reserves and wildlife habitat lands to constitute the start of this network. Part of the province's biodiversity strategy, the RAN used the soil related features of the new ecoregions classification system to define enduring features. From these, new candidate areas were selected to complement the features found in existing sites, to represent the province's 11 distinct ecoregions. *RAN* sites serve the purposes of establishing benchmark areas for ecosystem health monitoring that will guide ecosystem manage-

ment efforts, and helping to conserve samples of the range of biodiversity found in Saskatchewan.

In less than 18 months, an additional 1.6 million hectares of ecologically important sites were formally added to the *Representative Area Network*. This brings the total to about 4.5 million hectares of protected lands or 2.7 million hectares since the *Statement of Commitment* in 1992.

The list of representative areas designated since October 1997 is long and diverse, affecting virtually every ecoregion in the province. Newly protected Crown land areas include:

- 27 parkland reserves in the **Pasquia Porcupine Forest** in northeastern Saskatchewan. Totaling some 76,488 hectares, these sites capture a mix of forest, riparian areas, bog and peat lands.
- **McCusker Lake Ecological Reserve**, **Primrose Lake Ecological Reserve** and **Primrose Lake Wildlife Refuge**, all contained within the Cold Lake Air Weapons Range in northwestern Saskatchewan. Totaling nearly 171,000 hectares, these sites capture a combination of rolling uplands and undulating plains typical of this ecoregion.
- **MacDowall Bog Protected Area**, a small (57 hectares) but unique site lying south of Prince Albert, contains numerous provincially and nationally rare plant species, as well as an unusually high number and variety of orchids.
- **Douglas Provincial Park Expansion** added 1,300 hectares to the 6,144 hectares already designated within this natural environment park adjacent to Diefenbaker Lake.
- **Wapawekka Hills Representative Area Ecological Reserve** lying south of La Ronge includes 67,715 hectares of rugged and pristine wilderness. The steep slopes and plateaus of the Wapawekka Hills support a diverse abundance of wildlife, mature trees, rare plants and water. The site also holds traditional cultural values for local Aboriginal people who have used the area for generations.
- **Seager Wheeler Lake Representative Area Ecological Reserve** is a large (177,921 hectares) black spruce-tamarack lowland area lying just south of Deschambault Lake. Home to a variety of wildlife including the great grey owl and the provincially protected woodland caribou, this site is typical of the Mid-Boreal Lowland Ecoregion.



Wapawekka Hills, Saskatchewan

Representative areas have been identified in each of the province's 11 ecoregions. Particular emphasis has been directed to establishing representative areas in ecoregions that previously did not have protection within their boundaries. As well, efforts have been directed to securing additional protection for sites within southern Saskatchewan's grasslands ecoregion, one of the most significantly altered landscapes in the world.

While representative areas are initially selected based on their ecological value and utility as benchmarks for ecological health monitoring, the support, input and guidance of local interest groups, community residents and resource users helps government to finalize site boundaries, select appropriate designation tools, and guide long-term site management.

Crown lands administered by *Saskatchewan Environment and Resource Management (SERM)* are legally designated and managed according to any one of a number of legislative options. Depending upon the particular resource and ecological values to be protected and the level of use to be continued within the site, a Crown land representative area may be formally designated under *The Ecological Reserves Act*, *The Parks Act* (provincial parks and protected areas) or *The Wildlife Act* (game preserves, wildlife management units and wildlife refuges). Direct purchases of land through the *Fish and Wildlife Development Fund* are also considered as contributory to the Network. *SERM* continues to be responsible for long-term management of Crown land sites and the resources found within them, although this is usually assisted through Advisory Boards established to provide counsel on each representative area. By March 31, 1999, over a half million hectares of *SERM*-administered Crown lands had been added to the *Representative Areas Network*.

PARTNERSHIPS ARE KEY

Over 1.2 million hectares of private land and lands not administered by *SERM* have also been recognized within the *Representative Areas Network* through cooperative partnership arrangements. By entering into joint partnership agreements, memoranda of understanding or conservation easements, SERM works closely with its partners to help guide management of these lands in a way that will ensure maintenance of the long term health of the soil, water, plants, animals, and other organisms that make up the ecosystem. In return, SERM benefits by having access to these lands and resources for education and research purposes.

Overall responsibility for long term management of private lands and lands not administered by SERM continues to rest with the landowning agency or individual. Working together with other partners and landowners also helps to support the province's commitment to cooperative and community-based environmental protection.

The province has forged partnerships for land and water management with:

- *Ducks Unlimited Canada*, covering the 364,230 hectares of marshlands and associated uplands managed by *Ducks Unlimited* in Saskatchewan.
- *Saskatchewan Wetlands Conservation Corporation* covering 10,522 hectares of wetlands, remnant prairie and riparian areas administered by this government agency.
- *Redberry Lake Pelican Project*, including 6,585 hectares at Redberry Lake, along with its associated uplands. Renowned for many years within Saskatchewan for its large and diverse resident populations of rare or threatened waterfowl, this site was recognized in early 2000 as a Biosphere Reserve.
- *Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration (PFRA)*, an arm of Agriculture Canada, maintains 728,460 hectares of pastures in Saskatchewan. Containing some of the largest remaining parcels of unbroken native grasslands in the prairies, this pasture system offers a significant contribution to the objectives of the *Representative Areas Network*.
- *Canadian Wildlife Service*, administrators of ten Migratory Bird Sanctuaries covering 54,390 hectares throughout southern and central Saskatchewan, supports the principles and objectives of the *Representative Areas Network* through management of these sites.
- *Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan* - Rocanville, owners of a 1,489 hectare parcel of open grasslands and aspen bluffs in southeastern Saskatchewan, entered into a partnership agreement with *SERM* to continue to conserve the land's biological diversity in an area that has otherwise been developed for agricultural purposes.
- *Canadian Forces Detachment - Dundurn* endorsed an agreement with *SERM* to recognize the ecological integrity and biological diversity of the 22,000 hectare *Dundurn Camp*, home to a range of mammals, birds and plants in a rich mixture of open grassland, shrub/grass communities and poplar stands.
- Private lands containing native prairie located across southern Saskatchewan have also been protected through conservation easements. Easement agreements ensure that the land will remain in its natural state in perpetuity supporting a variety of wildlife, birds and plants regardless of changes in land ownership.
- Selected purchases made through the *Fish and Wildlife Development Fund* also secured lands across southern and central Saskatchewan that contain native prairie, bluffs, and riparian features that support a range of wildlife species.

ACTION PLAN FOR THE FUTURE

Saskatchewan is working towards honouring its commitment by the end of 2000. Living up to provincial and national commitments to contribute to the preservation of ecological diversity and to protect areas with significant cultural heritage, landscapes and outdoor recreation values as well as wilderness areas remains an ongoing priority for the Government. In keeping with the need to have local public input and support for site selection, designation and management, some discussions to resolve issues have required additional time to complete.

Pending finalization through these public consultation processes, these sites, primarily located in the central and northern ecoregions of Saskatchewan where representation was not adequate, total about 2 million hectares. When designation processes are complete, this will result in a network of sites protecting some 6.5 million hectares, or roughly about 10% of Saskatchewan's total area.

Bainbridge
Saskatche

Wapaw
Saskato

Wapawekka Hills,
Saskatchewan

Woody Lake, Saskatchewan

Serendipity Valley, Proposed Misaw Lake Representative Area, Saskatchewan

Sites under discussion and at various stages nearing designation include:

Tazin Lake Upland	
Tazin Lake Representative Area	166,000 ha
Chappuis-Fontaine Lakes Representative Area	319,000 ha
Selwyn Lake Upland	
Misaw Lake Representative Area	280,000 ha
Churchill River Upland	
Geikie River Representative Area	260,000 ha
Pink Lake Representative Area	350,000 ha
Haldorson Bay Representative Area	6,700 ha
Perry Lake Representative Area	39,700 ha
Mari Lake Representative Area	31,600 ha
Amisk Lake Representative Area	1,700 ha
Sturgeon-Weir Representative Area	4,500 ha
Jan Lake Representative Area	32,900 ha
Mid-boreal Upland	
Firebag Lake Representative Area	250,000 ha
Niyawahkahk Representative Area	3,800 ha
Selenite Point Representative Area	3,800 ha
Budd Lake Representative Area	40,000 ha
Caribou Flats Representative Area	10,000 ha
Mid-boreal Lowland	
Lobstick Lake Representative Area	89,400 ha

The estimated sizes indicated here are subject to change, given the importance of public input in finalizing site boundaries. Additional sites, although expected to be smaller in size, may also be identified over time to address gaps in representation that may become evident in the future. These will be identified and discussed in a broader public forum on an ongoing basis, as unmet needs are determined.

In addition, efforts will continue in southern Saskatchewan to secure private lands using conservation easements, purchases through the *Fish and Wildlife Development Fund* (where appropriate) and additional cooperative partnership agreements. As well, a number of land use planning exercises now underway from the forest fringe northward will result in more areas being given special status through zoning or being recommended by local planning advisory committees for further designation.

The province is pleased, both with efforts to date and with the level of co-operation and involvement it has received from the corporate sector, conservation organizations and the general public who share a common goal of protecting and managing Saskatchewan's rich landscapes, cultural heritage, outdoor recreation values and wilderness for future generations.■

Manitoba

In 1990, in response to the *World Wildlife Fund* Canada's *Endangered Spaces Campaign*, and in advance of the multilateral 1992 commitment, Manitoba dedicated itself to establishing a network of protected areas. Following extensive public consultations, the *Natural Lands and Special Places Strategy* was formulated and in the process became the policy foundation for Manitoba's *Protected Areas Initiative*.

This policy statement re-affirmed Manitoba's objective to permanently protect a representative example of all the province's diverse landscapes. As a result of this policy initiative, *An Action Plan for Manitoba's Network of Protected Areas* was developed in 1993, updated in 1997 and revised again in 2000. It outlines how new protected lands are to be added to the existing network.

The *Action Plan* has been widely distributed throughout government and to various stakeholders, including the corporate sector, First Nations and northern communities, rural municipalities and conservation groups. The *Action Plan* and the recently created Manitoba protected areas website will help foster public understanding for protected areas and lead Manitoba into the next millennium.

ACHIEVEMENTS AND SUCCESSES

Manitoba continues to make progress by designating new protected areas, consulting with First Nations, northern communities and industry and enhancing the protection of parks and wildlife management areas. When Manitoba endorsed the *Endangered Spaces Campaign* in 1990, only twelve provincial ecological reserves and **Riding Mountain National Park**, totaling some 350,000 hectares, qualified as protected areas.

In the decade since, Manitoba has made significant gains in creating new protected areas and enhancing protection of existing designated lands through legislation, regulation and practice. The result has been the addition of 5,200,000 hectares to the provincial inventory of protected lands.

Caribou River Park Reserve, Manitoba

Reindeer Island Ecological Reserve, Manitoba

The following table briefly illustrates the increase in Manitoba's network of protected lands over time and the milestones that led to these successes.

Year	% Prov. Protected	Area (hectares)	Milestones
1990-91	0.6%	350,000	Manitoba commits to a protected areas program
1991-92	0.6%	350,000	Policy framework developed on protected areas
1992-93	0.6%	350,000	Public consultations on protected areas
1993-94	2.2%	1,440,000	Protected part of *Cape Churchill Wildlife Management Area*
1994-95	5.5%	3,590,000	Created four new protected provincial parks
1995-96	5.5%	3,590,000	Public consultations on changes to provincial parks legislation
1996-97	6.8%	4,390,000	Created ecological reserves and protected portions of provincial parks and wildlife management areas
1997-98	6.8%	4,420,000	Protected additional wildlife management areas
1998-99	8.1%	5,270,000	Created two new protected park reserves, one ecological reserve and protected a portion of *Canadian Forces Base Shilo*
1999-00	8.5%	5,550,000	Created three new protected park reserves and protected 21 additional wildlife management areas

Provincial Park, Manitoba

la/Grindstone vincial Park, nitoba

There have been other notable accomplishments in Manitoba since 1990.

In 1996-97, new protected parks and wildlife management areas and the signing of the **Wapusk National Park** agreement all contributed to Manitoba being awarded a B+ from the *Endangered Spaces Campaign*, the highest provincial grade in Canada that year.

In 1997-98, Manitoba signed a *Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)* with First Nations concerning the creation of a partnership in the identification, establishment and management of new protected areas. In the same year, excellent progress was made with the mining sector in Manitoba to gain their support on recommending protection status for numerous areas of special interest. In 1998-99, Manitoba's B- grade from the *Endangered Spaces Campaign* was the second highest in Canada. In the last year of the *Endangered Spaces Campaign* (1999-2000), Manitoba increased its grade, from the previous year, to a B with the creation of three new park reserves, protection of twenty-one wildlife management areas, a formal extension of the First Nations MOU for three years, the launch of a protected areas website — **www.manitobaparks.com** — and the preparation of a three-year *Action Plan* to 2003.

Presently Manitoba's network of protected lands is just over 5,500,000 hectares. About 23% of the enduring features of the province are represented to some degree (adequately or moderately) by existing protected areas. It is anticipated that while a majority (80 to 100%) of the enduring features in northern and central Manitoba could be adequately represented with protected areas, only 40 to 50% of the southern enduring features have reasonable potential for protection and representation

due to existing development and private lands. A major effort is now being made to maximize the opportunities for new protected areas in southern Manitoba.

A CHALLENGING AND SOMETIMES DIFFICULT PROCESS

Compiling up-to-date information and maintaining an open, transparent and timely consultation process with diverse groups of competing and complementary interests are major challenges. For example, the *Memorandum of Understanding* signed with First Nations' organizations has been extended to 2003. The MOU commits Manitoba to work co-operatively with First Nations communities regarding the establishment of new protected areas. This involves sixty-four First Nation communities along with associated aboriginal groups and agencies that work with First Nations on land use issues. Maintaining contact, understanding the interrelationships between communities, being sensitive to First Nation values, and seeking First Nations' consensus on protected areas have been and will continue to be necessary in the establishment of new protected areas.

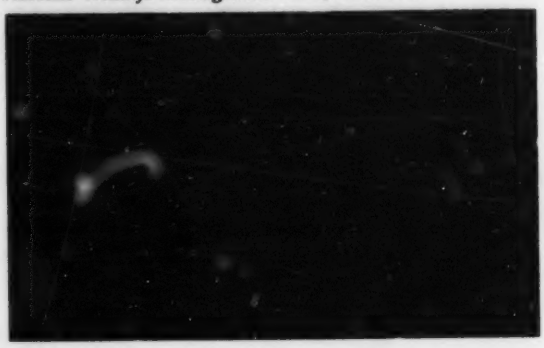
Within industry, the mining sector has been supportive of protected areas by identifying nearly 2,600,000 hectares of land for protection. It is now important to complete consultations on these areas with other sectors so that new protected areas can be created, to demonstrate results and maintain support from the mining industry.

Although less progress has been made with the forest industry than the mining industry, recent initiatives from forest industry representatives have shown a very encouraging interest in actively participating in the *Protected Areas Initiative*. They have formed an industry working group to liaise on the identification and establishment of protected areas. This bodes well for future discussions and additions to Manitoba's program.

It will also be a challenge to adequately involve the numerous other communities and interest groups in agro-Manitoba in the consultation process and establishment of protected areas. While some initial work has been done in agro-Manitoba, a renewed focus will occur in this region in the years ahead. With the recent addition of new staff for the *Protected Areas Initiative*, the province will now begin to tackle the complex issue of identifying the remaining areas of natural lands in the most developed portion of Manitoba.

Over the last three years considerable effort has been focussed on assembling the necessary resources to conduct effective consultation and to create and manage protected areas. The ongoing work to collect resource information, conduct analysis, consult, produce documents, maps and information resources will continue to be a challenge. Also, once lands have been designated, the province fully understands the importance of follow-up work with communities, industries and interest groups to develop reasonable and lasting management plans for newly designated protected areas.

Red-sided Garter Snake Mating Ball, Narcisse Wildlife Management Area, Manitoba



Spruce Woods Provincial Park, Manitoba

Beaudry Provincial Park, Manitob

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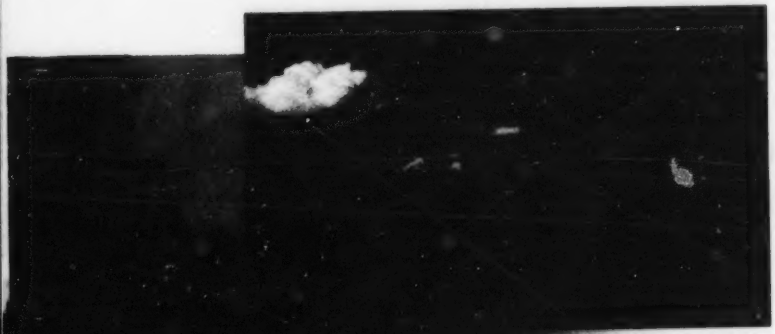


Hill Provincial Park, Manitoba

Hecla/Grindstone Provincial Park, Manitoba

There have been other notable accomplishments in Manitoba since 1990.

In 1996-97, new protected parks and wildlife management areas and the signing of the **Wapusk National Park** agreement all contributed to Manitoba being awarded a B+ from the *Endangered Spaces Campaign*, the highest provincial grade in Canada that year.

In 1997-98, Manitoba signed a *Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)* with First Nations concerning the creation of a partnership in the identification, establishment and management of new protected areas. In the same year, excellent progress was made with the mining sector in Manitoba to gain their support on recommending protection status for numerous areas of special interest. In 1998-99, Manitoba's B- grade from the *Endangered Spaces Campaign* was the second highest in Canada. In the last year of the *Endangered Spaces Campaign* (1999-2000), Manitoba increased its grade, from the previous year, to a B with the creation of three new park reserves, protection of twenty-one wildlife management areas, a formal extension of the First Nations MOU for three years, the launch of a protected areas website — **www.manitobaparks.com** — and the preparation of a three-year *Action Plan* to 2003.

Presently Manitoba's network of protected lands is just over 5,500,000 hectares. About 23% of the enduring features of the province are represented to some degree (adequately or moderately) by existing protected areas. It is anticipated that while a majority (80 to 100%) of the enduring features in northern and central Manitoba could be adequately represented with protected areas, only 40 to 50% of the southern enduring features have reasonable potential for protection and representation

due to existing development and private lands. A major effort is now being made to maximize the opportunities for new protected areas in southern Manitoba.

A CHALLENGING AND SOMETIMES DIFFICULT PROCESS

Compiling up-to-date information and maintaining an open, transparent and timely consultation process with diverse groups of competing and complementary interests are major challenges. For example, the *Memorandum of Understanding* signed with First Nations' organizations has been extended to 2003. The MOU commits Manitoba to work co-operatively with First Nations communities regarding the establishment of new protected areas. This involves sixty-four First Nation communities along with associated aboriginal groups and agencies that work with First Nations on land use issues. Maintaining contact, understanding the interrelationships between communities, being sensitive to First Nation values, and seeking First Nations' consensus on protected areas have been and will continue to be necessary in the establishment of new protected areas.

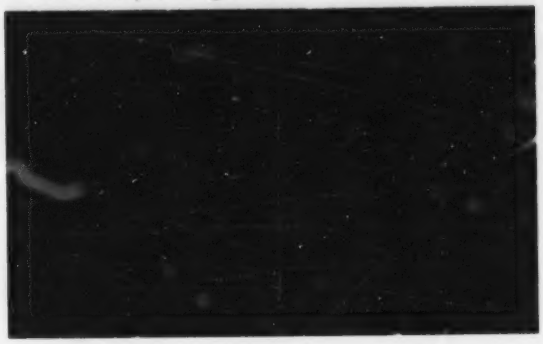
Within industry, the mining sector has been supportive of protected areas by identifying nearly 2,600,000 hectares of land for protection. It is now important to complete consultations on these areas with other sectors so that new protected areas can be created, to demonstrate results and maintain support from the mining industry.

Although less progress has been made with the forest industry than the mining industry, recent initiatives from forest industry representatives have shown a very encouraging interest in actively participating in the *Protected Areas Initiative*. They have formed an industry working group to liaise on the identification and establishment of protected areas. This bodes well for future discussions and additions to Manitoba's program.

It will also be a challenge to adequately involve the numerous other communities and interest groups in agro-Manitoba in the consultation process and establishment of protected areas. While some initial work has been done in agro-Manitoba, a renewed focus will occur in this region in the years ahead. With the recent addition of new staff for the *Protected Areas Initiative*, the province will now begin to tackle the complex issue of identifying the remaining areas of natural lands in the most developed portion of Manitoba.

Over the last three years considerable effort has been focussed on assembling the necessary resources to conduct effective consultation and to create and manage protected areas. The ongoing work to collect resource information, conduct analysis, consult, produce documents, maps and information resources will continue to be a challenge. Also, once lands have been designated, the province fully understands the importance of follow-up work with communities, industries and interest groups to develop reasonable and lasting management plans for newly designated protected areas.

Red-sided Garter Snake Mating Ball, Narcisse Wildlife Management Area, Manitoba



Spruce Woods Provincial Park, Manitoba

Beaudry Provincial Park, Manitoba

Over the last five years, Manitoba has made significant advances in conducting computer-based broad scale landscape analysis to identify areas of interest for protection. Additional work and study is required to merge these new techniques with current biological inventories of areas to ensure important ecological information is not left out as long-term land use decisions are made.

MARINE PROTECTED AREAS

To date, most of the effort to protect Manitoba's biodiversity has focused on the province's landmass. In the years ahead, the opportunity for marine protected areas must also be examined. The establishment of one or more protected areas in Hudson Bay, in particular, has much potential. Manitoba has identified areas with potential along the coast of Hudson Bay. A co-ordinated approach will be sought with Nunavut, the federal government, industry and communities on the nature and scope of marine protected areas.

ONGOING COMMITMENT

An Action Plan for Manitoba's Network of Protected Areas has recently been revised. It lays out a course of action for the creation of new protected areas over the next three years. Owing to the complexity of the consultation process, it is difficult to predict exactly where and when the next new protected areas will be established. However, Manitoba is confident that the groundwork of the last ten years will yield exciting results. The co-operative and productive work that has been done with industry, First Nations, various communities and interest groups will, without a doubt, lead to the creation of many new protected areas in northern and central Manitoba over the next few months and years.

The work that has recently begun in Manitoba with the many conservation groups and agencies in rural Manitoba to identify areas for protection in the most developed part of the province also holds significant promise.

Work on marine protected areas and First Nations' involvement in the identification, establishment and management of protected areas will continue to be major thrusts of activity over the next three years.

Both the World Wildlife Fund's *Endangered Spaces Campaign* and governments' 1992 Statement of Commitment motivated Manitoba's protected areas initiative. While 2000 marks the close of both the campaign and the 1992 statement, their ideals and objectives will endure as Manitoba is committed to continue the task of achieving adequate representation in new protected areas by building on the First Nations', industry and community support established so far.■

Duck Mountain Provincial Park, Manitoba

Turtle Mountain Provincial Park, Manitoba

Ontario

Massassauga Provincial Park, Ontario

With *Ontario's Living Legacy Strategy* leading the way, Ontario is making tremendous strides in meeting its obligations under the *Statement of Commitment to Complete Canada's Networks of Protected Areas.*

The joint *Statement of Commitment* supports the *United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity* that was endorsed by Canada and 159 other nations at the June 1992 Earth Summit in Brazil. The UN Convention calls for countries to protect more natural areas, and find new ways of establishing and managing these areas while promoting environmentally sound and sustainable development of natural resources.

Ontario's Living Legacy, announced by Premier Mike Harris in 1999, makes possible the creation of 378 new parks and protected areas totaling an additional 2.4 million hectares. This is the biggest single expansion of parks and protected areas — anywhere. With these additions, Ontario has increased the area of its system by 51% since 1992. The *Living Legacy* strategy also features a unique accord among government, environmental groups and the forest industry to work together to resolve differences over how Ontario's Crown land is used and protected.

Ontario's goal is to complete a system of protected areas representing the full spectrum of the province's natural features and ecosystems. Major programs designed to help us meet that goal — and fulfill our global commitment — are outlined below.

THE PROGRESS CONTINUES

Ontario has undertaken a range of initiatives to meet this goal. Major programs are described below.

Nature's Best: A Framework and Action Plan — Announced in February, 1997, *Nature's Best* is a strategy for completing Ontario's system of parks and protected areas. It lays out a policy framework, planning approaches, tools for protection and broad guidelines for management, as well as an action plan defining both short and long term actions.

Ontario's Living Legacy Land Use Strategy — The *Strategy* provides direction for management of 39 million hectares of Crown land in a planning area covering 45% of the province. Approved in July, 1999, the *Strategy* was developed after an extensive planning process carried out from February, 1997 to May, 1999. This process included the broadest public consultation in the province's history. One of four specific objectives for the planning process was to complete Ontario's system of parks and protected areas.

Ontario Parks Legacy 2000 — This is a partnership with the *Nature Conservancy of Canada* to acquire $10 million worth of land for provincial parks by

Lake Superior, Ontario

arney, Ontario

Great Lakes Heritage Coast — Lake Superior, Ontario

December 31, 2000. To date, more than 10,800 hectares with a value of over $9.1 million have been acquired.

Community Conservancy Program — A second, more recent, partnership with the *Nature Conservancy of Canada* , the *Community Conservancy Program* will protect natural areas with a value of $6 million by 2000. Conservation easements will be the primary tool, but other methods of securement may be used.

Natural Areas Protection Program — This is a 5-year, $20 million program focused on acquisition of land for the *Niagara Escarpment Park System, Lynde Marsh* and *Rouge Park;*

Conservation Land Tax Incentive Program — This program provides 100% property tax relief to landowners whose properties meet specified natural heritage protection criteria. Its objective is to encourage landowners to preserve lands that have significant natural values. Currently, the program encourages protection of 11,800 properties with a total area of 155,800 hectares.

When the *Statement of Commitment* was signed in 1992, Ontario had 260 Provincial Parks with an area of 6,328,625 hectares. By December 31, 1999, Ontario had expanded the total protected area system under regulation to 295 areas, with a combined area of 7,170,940 hectares. These protected areas include Conservation Reserves, regulated under the *Public Lands Act*, and Provincial Parks, regulated under the *Provincial Parks Act*. Commercial logging, hydroelectric development and mining are not permitted in these areas. The one exception is that carefully controlled selective logging is permitted in the *Recreation Utilization Zone* of **Algonquin Provincial Park**.

Key measures taken since 1992 to complete Ontario's protected areas system include the following.

- Twelve new provincial parks and numerous additions to existing provincial parks were regulated under the Provincial Parks Act. These new parks and additions have a total area of 773,581 hectares. The largest addition was a 737,061-hectare expansion of **Wabakimi Provincial Park**, a wilderness class park in Northwestern Ontario. Also included are three new nature reserve class provincial parks acquired under the *Ontario Parks Legacy 2000* partnership with the *Nature Conservancy of Canada: Menzel Centennial, Morris Tract,* and *Beattie Pinery*.
- Twenty-three conservation reserves, with an area of 68,734 hectares were regulated under the *Public Lands Act*.
- *Ontario's Living Legacy Strategy* makes possible the establishment of sixty-one new provincial parks and forty-five additions with a total area of 913,352 hectares, plus 271 new conservation reserves and one addition with a total area of 1,473,327 hectares. This will increase the total area that is protected in regulation to 12% of the strategy planning area, or 5,989,633 hectares. The new parks and conservation reserves identified through *Living Legacy* will be the single largest addition to the provincial parks system since its inception more than 100 years ago.

- *Ontario's Living Legacy* identifies nine new featured areas or signature sites that have outstanding natural, tourism and recreation values: **Great Lakes Heritage Coast, Lake Nipigon Basin, Algoma Headwaters, Spanish River Valley, Kawartha Highlands, Killarney, St. Raphael, Nagagamisis Central Plateau Complex**, and **Woodland Caribou**. Signature sites include numerous provincial parks and conservation reserves, as well as areas of non-regulated Crown land that will be managed specifically to protect natural values and enhance tourism.
- The **Great Lakes Heritage Coast** signature site is a spectacular 2,900-kilometre sweep of shoreline stretching from Central Georgian Bay along the shores of Lake Huron and Lake Superior to Thunder Bay. Discussions with communities and individuals along the coast began in January 2000 to find the best ways to ensure long-term protection of this coastline, identify opportunities to expand tourism and recreation, and achieve common goals.
- Acquisition of new protected areas continues under the programs outlined above including *Ontario's Parks Legacy 2000*, the *Community Conservancy Program* and the *Natural Areas Protection Program*. For example, a significant 7,000 hectare alvar site on Manitoulin Island in Lake Huron was recently acquired under *Ontario Parks Legacy 2000*. Alvars are globally rare habitats that exist only on relatively flat limestone bedrock that has been scraped clean by glacial action, wind and water. They support distinctive plant communities that include wildflowers, mosses, lichens, grasses, sedges, shrubs and stunted trees.

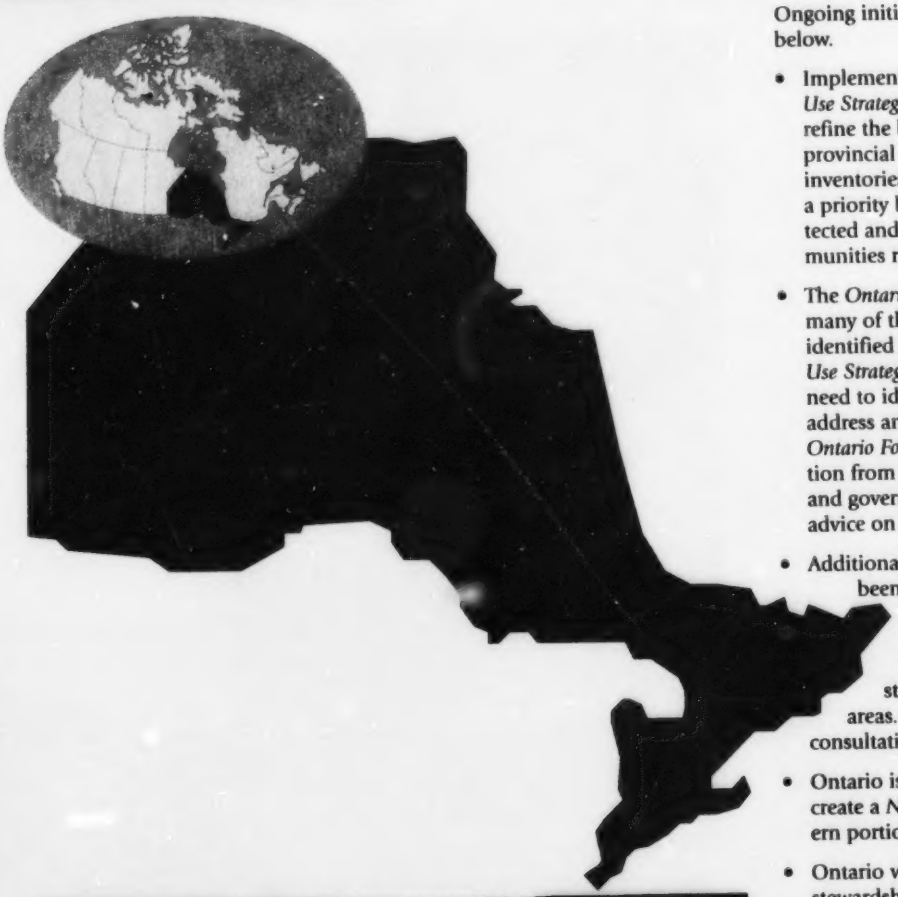
French River, Ontario

NOT STANDING STILL

Ontario is proud of its accomplishments since 1992 to protect more natural areas and ensure sustainable resource development. When the new parks and protected areas are regulated, Ontario's system will have increased in area by 51% since 1992, with 650 provincial parks and protected areas encompassing 9.5 million hectares. This is an area equivalent to all of O... south of Algonquin Park.

Building on the success of *Ontario's Living Legacy*, On... rio is continuing to move towards its goal of comple... a system of parks and protected areas that fully repr... sents the province's natural features and biodiver...

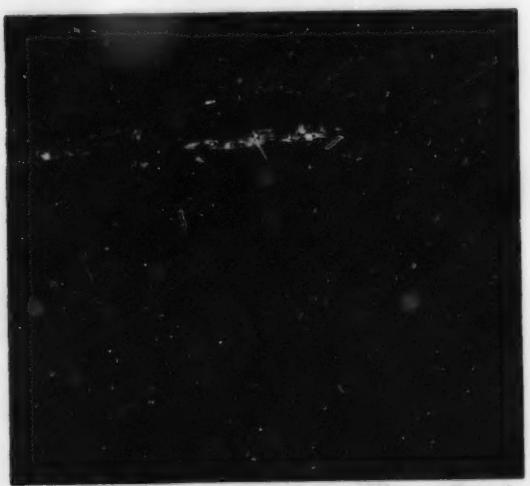
Future expansion of the system will continue to r... nize the need to protect jobs in resource ind... local economies, and to consult with First Na... appropriate. Most land in Southern Ontario is pr... owned, and Ontario will ensure that the rights of landowners are respected when establishing new protected areas.



Sleeping Giant, Ontario

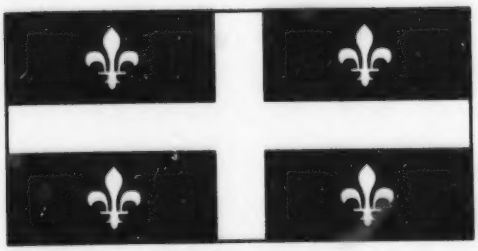
Ongoing initiatives to expand the system are outlined below.

- Implementation of the *Ontario's Living Legacy Land Use Strategy* is a high priority. First steps will be to refine the boundaries of and regulate identified provincial parks and conservation reserves. Resource inventories and planning must then be completed on a priority basis in order to ensure that areas are protected and managed effectively, and that local communities receive benefits from increased tourism.
- The *Ontario Forest Accord* was developed to deal with many of the land and resource use issues that were identified through the *Ontario's Living Legacy Land Use Strategy* process. One of these issues is the need to identify potential new protected areas that address any significant gaps in representation. The *Ontario Forest Accord Advisory Board*, with representation from environmental interests, the forest industry and government, has been established to provide advice on implementing the *Ontario Forest Accord*.
- Additional parks and protected areas have not yet been identified in a significant portion of Ontario — the lands and waters in the far north. A grass roots-driven public consultation program will be initiated as a first step to identifying candidate protected areas. First Nations will be key players in these consultations.
- Ontario is providing input into Canada's efforts to create a *National Marine Conservation Area* in the western portion of Lake Superior.
- Ontario will continue to use the securement and stewardship initiatives outlined above, such as *Ontario Parks Legacy 2000*, the *Community Conservancy Program*, the *Natural Areas Protection Program* and the *Conservation Land Tax Incentive Program*. These programs will be used to protect representative natural areas mainly in Southern Ontario, where there is a limited amount of Crown land.■



Killarney, Ontario

Quebec



PUBLICLY STATED OBJECTIVES OF THE GOVERNMENT OF QUÉBEC

In 1992, the Government of Québec released its *Action Plan for Parks: Nature's Heritage (La nature en héritage)*, a five-year action plan announcing the creation of four new parks south of the 50th parallel, and the Government's intention to consult with the Northern Communities interested in these projected parks north of the 50th parallel. The Government also wanted to ensure the conformity of this Plan with the provisions of the existing agreements with Northern Communities. Moreover, the Government made public its intention of creating Québec's first marine park — *The Saguenay—St-Lawrence Marine Park* — jointly with the Federal Government.

In July of 1996, the Government of Québec adopted a five-year plan proposing the establishment of fourteen new ecological reserves in the province.

PROGRESS MADE TOWARDS THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THIS GOAL

This year, as Québec's parks network numbers nineteen units covering a total area of 5,792,400 hectares, the *Action Plan for Parks: Nature's Heritage* will be completed. Two of the four proposed terrestrial parks announced have been established, that of **Mont-Mégantic** and the **Monts-Valin Park**. The other two are in the process of being established south of the 50th parallel. In addition, a fifth park has just been created (June 2000) to protect the exceptional natural site of the Hautes-Gorges-de-la-Rivière-Malbaie.

Y. Therrien

Gaspésie Park, Québec

Mont Tremblant Park, Québec

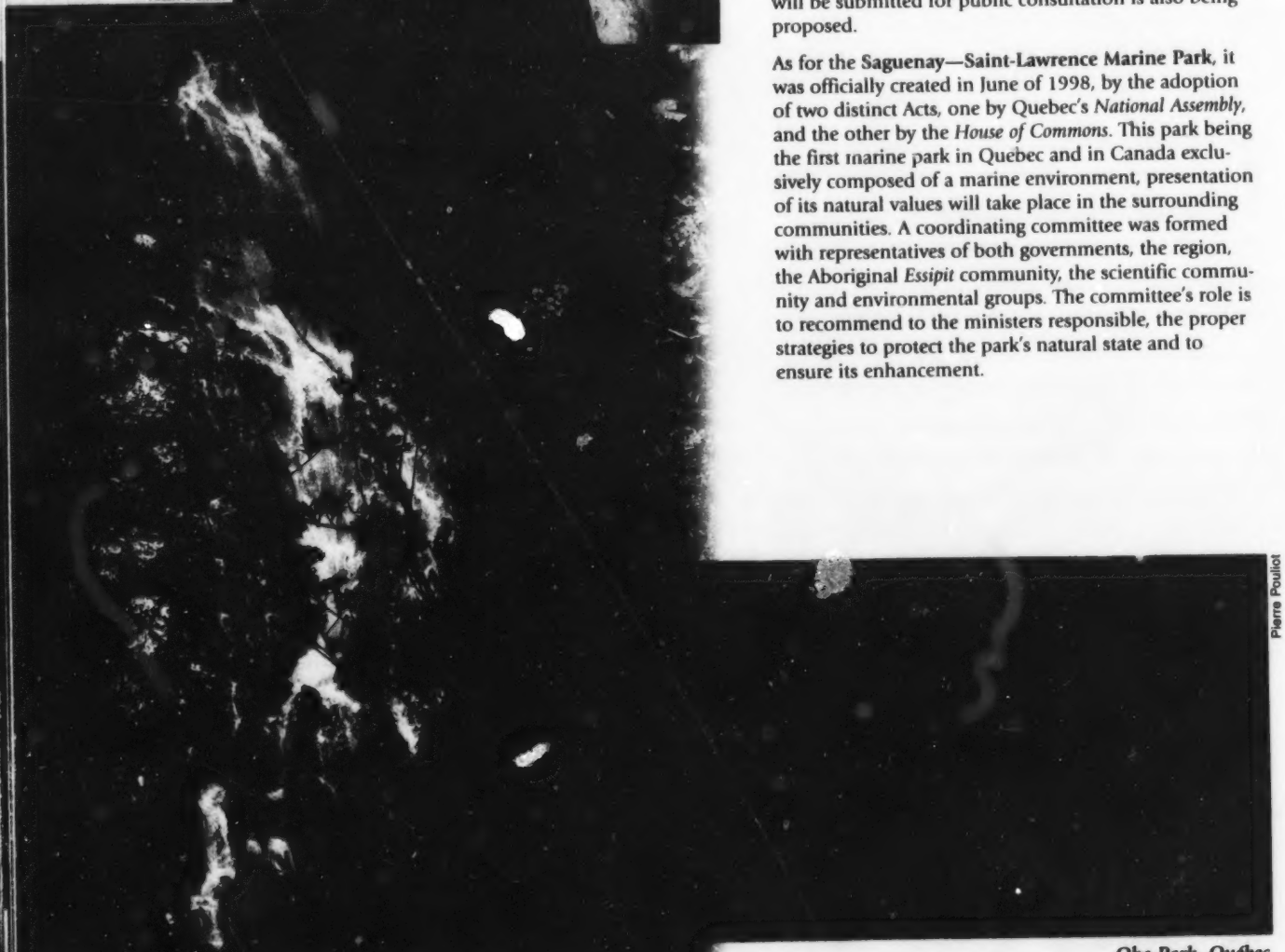
Of the twenty-three natural regions located south of the 50th parallel, fifteen are adequately represented by a park. This leaves but eight natural regions to be represented, five of which have had potential sites selected for such designation. Because potential sites on public lands are becoming scarce, and are increasingly in demand for all types of uses, two natural regions will only be partially represented by Québec parks, and another will not be represented at all for lack of finding suitable sites on public lands.

The organizations responsible for the application of the Northern Agreements have been consulted, and a *Joint Québec-Inuit Task Force* has been set up to create Québec's first northern park, **Pingualuit Park** (New Québec Crater). This project was included in Schedule 6 of the *James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement* (*Convention de la Baie-James et du Nord québécois*). An assessment of the environmental and social impacts is now underway, in accordance with the guideline issued to that effect by the *Kativik Environment Quality Commission* in 1999, and the draft master plan, which will be submitted for public consultation is also being proposed.

As for the **Saguenay—Saint-Lawrence Marine Park**, it was officially created in June of 1998, by the adoption of two distinct Acts, one by Quebec's *National Assembly*, and the other by the *House of Commons*. This park being the first marine park in Quebec and in Canada exclusively composed of a marine environment, presentation of its natural values will take place in the surrounding communities. A coordinating committee was formed with representatives of both governments, the region, the Aboriginal *Essipit* community, the scientific community and environmental groups. The committee's role is to recommend to the ministers responsible, the proper strategies to protect the park's natural state and to ensure its enhancement.

Monts Valin Park, Québec

Hautes-Gorges-de-la-Rivière-Malbaie Park, Québec
Alain Dumas



Pierre Pouliot

Oka Park, Québec

Between 1999 and 2001, action will be taken to establish fourteen new ecological reserves as part of the plan to pursue the creation of the network of ecological areas that could number as many as 120 to 150 sites. To this day, fifty-nine territories covering 70,000 hectares have been designated as ecological reserves.

Concerning Québec's natural marine areas, it is important to note that Québec's *Ministère de l'Environnement, Environment Canada* and *Fisheries and Oceans Canada*, have described and mapped the various natural marine areas of the St. Lawrence River. This ecological framework may help define a reference plan for a Québec system of protected marine areas.

FUTURE INITIATIVES

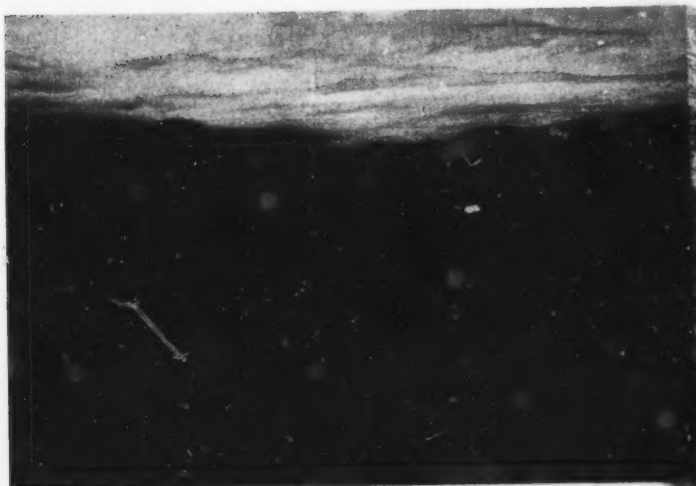
In relation to Québec's parks system, the next action plan should make it possible to complete the representation of forty-two of the forty-three natural areas based on a reference plan specifically tailored to the parks system. In the case of the natural regions without adequate public lands suited for park development, and those that would not be conveniently or sufficiently represented by a park, several options are being studied within the context of a strategy on Québec's protected areas.

Moreover, other working groups will be set up to create northern parks in cooperation with native communities. The goal of this initiative is to accelerate the determination of park boundaries in order to proceed with their establishment as soon as possible to guarantee permanent protection of these territories, and then to agree with neighbouring communities on the terms of the protection, development and Aboriginal management of these parks. For the time being, the territories concerned are under a temporary freeze with a view to turning them into Québec parks.

Luc Bergeron

Parc du Bic

Hautes-Gorges-de-la-Rivière-Malbaie Park, Québec



Jacques-Cartier Park, Québec

This year (2000), a new five-year plan will be drafted to further develop the network of ecological reserves.

As scheduled in the *St. Lawrence Vision 2000 Agreement (Phase III, 1998-2003)*, there are plans to establish a number of protected marine areas along the St. Lawrence River.

Within the context of a strategy and action plan on biodiversity, Québec pledged in 1996, to adopt a *strategy on protected areas*. Work is underway to implement this strategy dealing with the following actions:

a) adopt a definite goal in terms of the area to be protected in Québec as well as a timetable for such action;

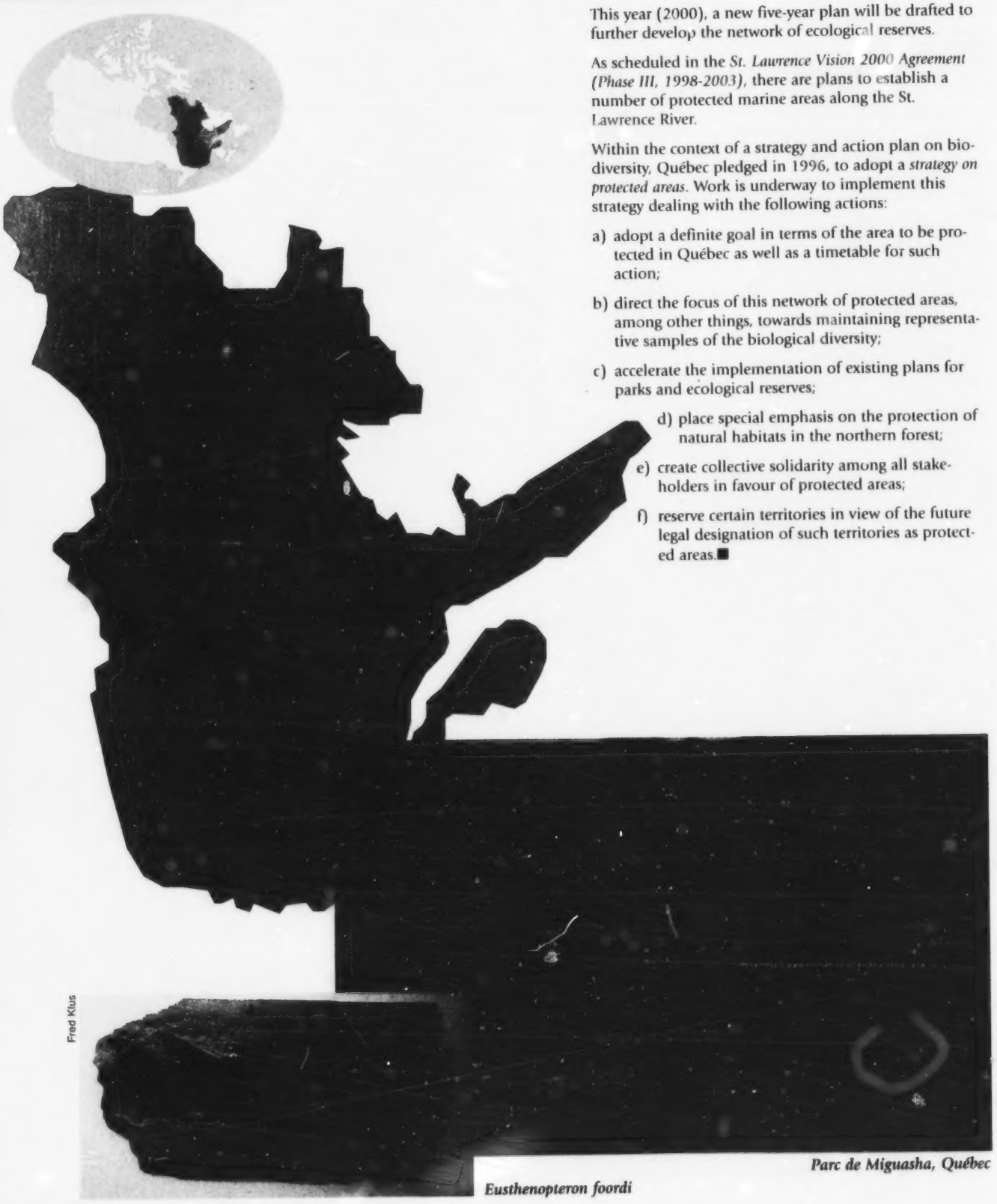
b) direct the focus of this network of protected areas, among other things, towards maintaining representative samples of the biological diversity;

c) accelerate the implementation of existing plans for parks and ecological reserves;

d) place special emphasis on the protection of natural habitats in the northern forest;

e) create collective solidarity among all stakeholders in favour of protected areas;

f) reserve certain territories in view of the future legal designation of such territories as protected areas.■

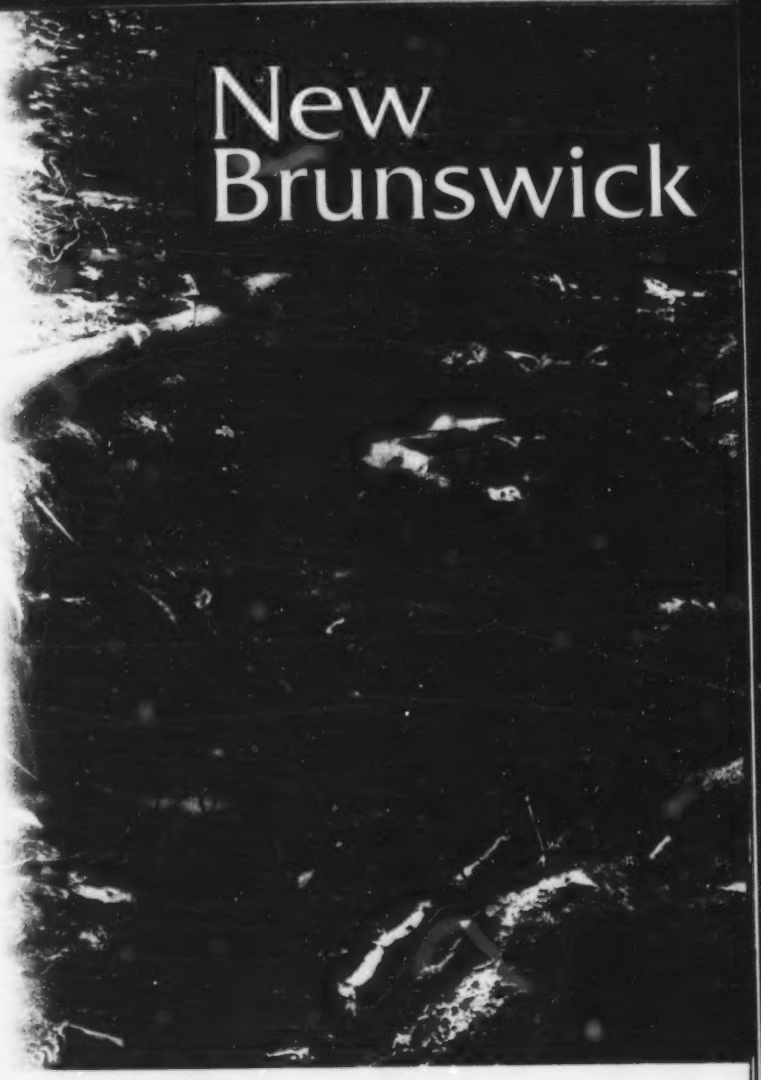


Fred Klus

Eusthenopteron foordi

Parc de Miguasha, Québec

New Brunswick



New Brunswick is committed to protecting its biological diversity. As such, Crown land is being managed for a variety of conservation-related objectives. With the new millennium, the province has undertaken a *Protected Areas Strategy*. This is expected to lead to expanding and strengthening enabling legislation for the preservation of the province's rich and diverse ecosystems.

ONGOING CONSERVATION INITIATIVES

Approximately 738,000 ha of Crown land in New Brunswick and 56,000 ha of privately owned land are being managed for a variety of conservation purposes. These include ecological reserves, conservation areas, *Outdoor Network Properties*, watercourse buffers, deer wintering areas, mature coniferous forest habitat, wetlands, wildlife reserves and other areas.

Fifteen ecological reserves (ER) and five conservation areas (CA) exist in the province. These have a combined area of over 9,000 hectares and include:

Point Wolfe River Gorge CA
Bay du Vin Island CA
McManus Hill CA
Little Salmon River Gorge CA
Kennedy Lakes CA
Oak Mountain ER
Phillipstown Blue Heron Site ER
Cranberry Lake Red Oak Stand ER
Loch Alva Red Spruce Stand ER
Blue Mountain Red Pine Stand ER
Glazier Lake Mixed Forest ER
McCoy Brook Mixed Hardwood ER
South Kedgwick R. Black Sp. ER
Tabusintac Backlands ER
Wilson Brook Gypsum Cliffs ER
Saint Croix River Islands ER
Mount Elizabeth ER
Freeze Lakes ER
Grover Mountain ER
Little Tomoowa Lake ER

ECOREGIONS

Seven ecoregions exist in New Brunswick and have been delineated on the basis of natural features such as soil type, elevation and climate. The **N.B. Highlands Ecoregion** extends some 820 metres above sea level and is dominated by a balsam fir and spruce forest. The **Northern and Central Uplands Ecoregions** occupy the next lower elevation zone, where sugar maple, yellow birch, and American beech mix with the conifers as important overstory dominants. The **Eastern Lowlands**, the **Grand Lake Lowlands** and the **Continental Lowlands Ecoregions** provide habitat for American basswood, silver maple, red ash, black cherry, eastern hemlock, ironwood, and buttenut. Lastly, the **Fundy Coastal Ecoregion** supports a forest dominated by red spruce within a climatic regime strongly moderated by the cold waters of the Bay of Fundy. Over 85% of New Brunswick's terrestrial land base is forest covered.

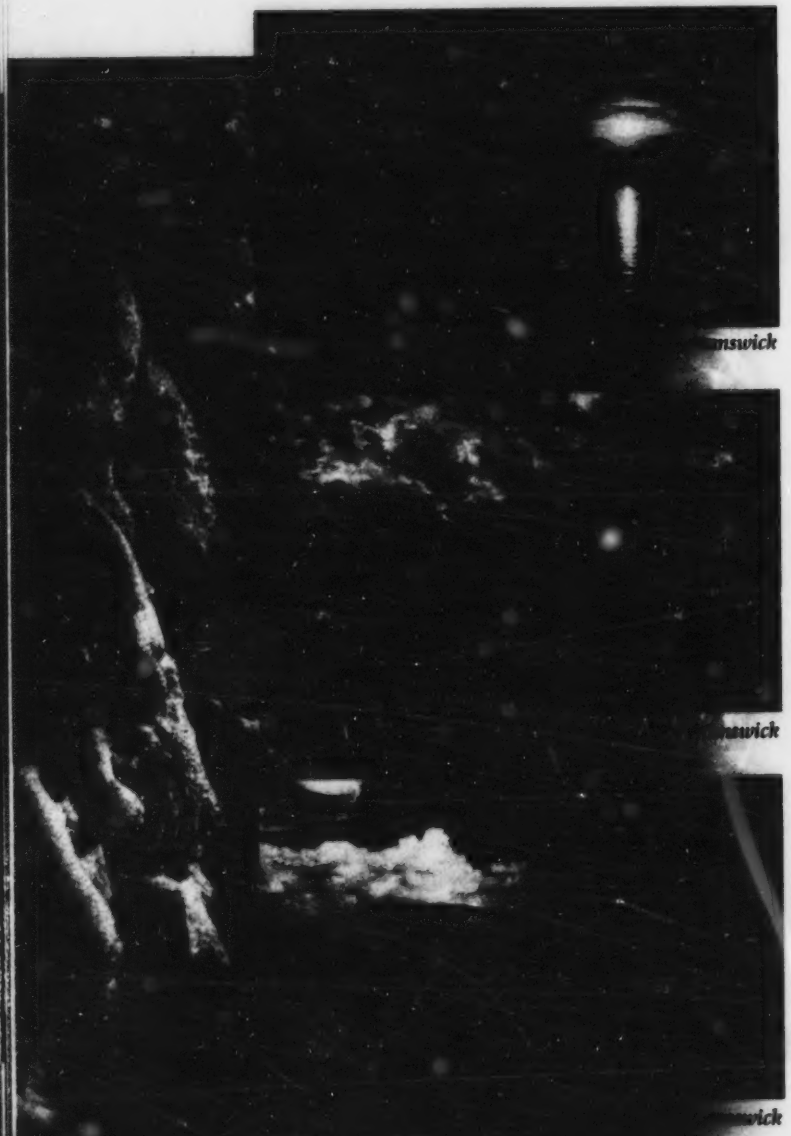
Small Waterfall at Mount Carleton, New Brunswick

Fifteen ecological reserves and five conservation areas exist in the province.

PROTECTED AREAS STRATEGY AT WORK

A *Protected Areas Strategy* for New Brunswick was submitted to the province in 1999. This *Strategy* identifies a number of candidate sites that contain the best examples of biodiversity in each of New Brunswick's seven ecoregions and advocates three approaches to conserve New Brunswick's biodiversity. These are:

- To protect one large area that is biophysically representative of each ecoregion;
- To identify and protect fine-scale features; and
- To harmonize biodiversity conservation initiatives in the Northern Appalachian-Acadian bioregion with neighbouring jurisdictions.



A multi-stakeholder committee was established to review the proposed strategy and to recommend an action plan for government. Recommendations from this committee are expected soon. A consultant was also hired to undertake a socio-economic assessment of the impacts which the proposed *Strategy* would likely have on New Brunswick. The province is protecting the proposed sites located on Crown land in the interim.

RE-ALIGNING RESPONSIBILITIES

Several key improvements were made to New Brunswick's *Parks Act* in 1999. These included amendments that enable both the *Minister of Economic Development, Tourism and Culture* and the *Minister of Natural Resources and Energy* to administer the *Act*; transferring operational responsibility for three *Outdoor Network Properties* to the *Department of Economic Development, Tourism and Culture (EDT&C)*; amendments to help facilitate the operation of campgrounds and recreation parks by the private sector; amendments to improve enforcement capabilities within all provincial parks; and an amendment to recognize **Sentier NB Trail** as being subject to the *Parks Act*.

A biophysical inventory was undertaken of **Sentier NB Trail** in 1999. Information was collected on forest cover types, wetlands, geological formations, farmland, seascapes, viewsheds, significant flora, waterfalls, historical sites, wildlife habitat, and watercourses. This information will be used to develop trail guides, to educate trail users about the diversity of New Brunswick's natural and cultural environments and to develop a nature interpretation plan for the **Sentier NB Trail**.

The *Department of Fisheries and Oceans* identified the Musquash Estuary, which is located along the Bay of Fundy coast some twenty kilometres west of the City of Saint John, as an Area of Interest under *The Oceans Act*. This is the first step toward possible designation as a *Marine Protected Area (MPA)*. Detailed scientific research is scheduled in the future to determine if this site is eligible for *MPA* designation.

Parks Canada continues to operate two large national parks in New Brunswick, these being **Fundy National Park** (20 590 ha) and **Kouchibouguac National Park** (23 880 ha). *DNRE* operates the **Appalachian Range Discovery Site** at Mount Carleton (17,427 ha). *EDT&C* operates fourteen *Outdoor Network Properties* and these have a combined area of 3,000 hectares. Thirty-four former provincial parks are being operated by the private sector while another 16 former parks are being operated by various municipalities and local service clubs.

The development of **Fundy Linear Park** continued in 1999. This site encompasses approximately 34 km of rugged Bay of Fundy coastline. In addition to being a protected area, this site contains breathtaking panoramic views and some of the most pristine shorelines found in the area.

The province acquired 156 000 hectares of land from *Georgia-Pacific Resins Inc.* in 1999. These lands, which are located in southwestern New Brunswick, were purchased because the land:

- came on the market and encompassed large tracts of woodland, wetlands, a diversity of wildlife habitat, lakes, rivers and streams, potentially significant ecological areas, and areas with a high capability for forest recreation;
- was seen as helping to offset the potential loss of wood fibre from Crown lands that might be removed from industrial forestry under the *Protected Areas Strategy*;
- enabled the province to obtain ownership of over 50% of the frontage on the **St. Croix Canadian Heritage River**.

TRAIL BLAZING

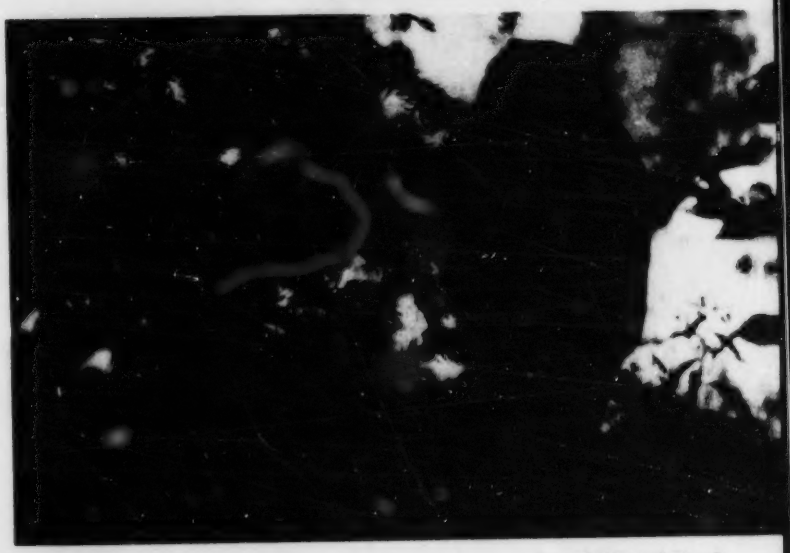
An extensive network of trail systems is being established in New Brunswick. These include the **Micmac Trail**, the **Maliseet Trail**, the **Trans Canada Trail**, the **International Appalachian Trail**, and **Sentier NB Trail**.

The New Brunswick component of the **International Appalachian Trail (IAT)** follows along the Appalachian Range and provides a connection between the Restigouche and Tobique Rivers, Mount Carleton and **Sentier NB Trail**. When complete, this hiking trail will link **Mount Katahdin** in Baxter State Park, Maine to **Parc Forillon**, located in Cap Gaspe, Quebec.

Sentier NB Trail is a multi-purpose, all season recreational trail being established for walkers, cyclists, horseback riders, hikers, snowshoers, dog sledders, cross-country skiers and snowmobilers (in designated areas). This trail system is using former railway beds as much as possible and provides users with an opportunity to view a rich diversity of coastal and inland natural and cultural features. To date, about one-half of this trail system has been finished.

The **Micmac Trail** is being established by the Pabineau First Nation in partnership with *DNRE*, and will extend from the Pabineau First Nation located south of Bathurst, to the **Appalachian Range Discovery Site** at Mount Carleton. This trail provides unique opportunities to view a variety of natural features located along the Nepisiguit River.

The provincial government is assisting the *New Brunswick ATV Federation* to identify local ATV trails on Crown land logging roads. This initiative is part of a strategy to organize and improve ATVing as an important recreational activity in New Brunswick. *DNRE* also leases approximately 2,900 km of Crown land to the *New Brunswick Federation of Snowmobile Clubs*.



Broad-Winged Hawk, New Brunswick

ON THE WATER

Two New Brunswick waterways are designated as Canadian Heritage Rivers, these being the **St. Croix River** (1991) and a 55-km stretch of the **Restigouche River** (1998). A community-based *Restigouche River Management Committee* worked in partnership with *DNRE* to develop and implement a comprehensive management plan for the Restigouche.

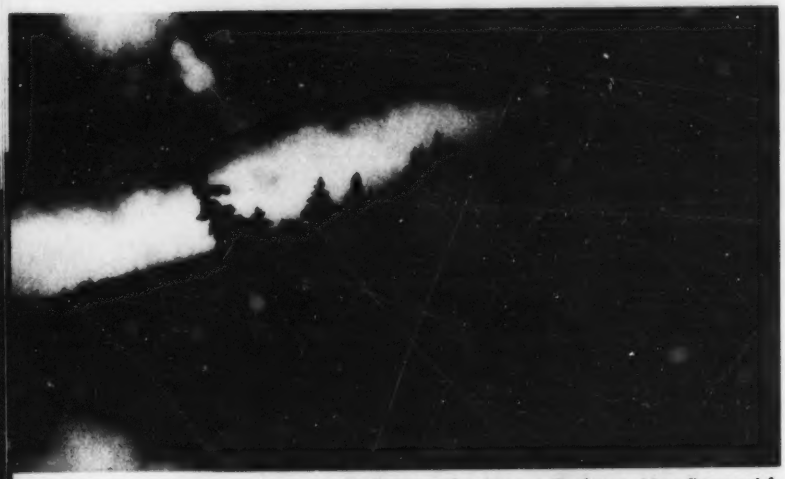
Two lakefront campgrounds are being operated by *DNRE* at North Lake and at Spednic Lake. These sites are situated on the **St. Croix Canadian Heritage River**, which is a recreational waterway that is managed with an emphasis on conservation. Improvements were undertaken to 30 remote campsites located along this international waterway in 1999.

The *Adopt-A-Stream Program* is administered by *DNRE* in co-operation with the *New Brunswick Wildlife Federation* and other volunteer-based organizations. This program is responsible for the removal of garbage, litter and debris from over 200 km of waterways and adjacent lands annually.

The Province of New Brunswick continued with efforts to establish a *Water Classification Program* designed to protect water quality in lakes, rivers and surface waters that supply municipal drinking water systems.

UNIQUE PRIVATE/PUBLIC SECTOR RELATIONS FOR LAND STEWARDSHIP

A variety of conservation projects were sponsored by *DNRE* in 1999 using *Environmental Trust Funds*. Among others, these included two projects that fostered private land stewardship in conserving ecologically significant sites and the undertaking of a biophysical inventory on **Sentier NB Trail**.



Bathurst Lake, Mount Carleton, New Brunswick

OTHER 1999 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

An *Atlantic Canada Conservation Data Centre (ACCDC)* was established in Sackville, New Brunswick, to provide information and expertise on species at risk and on natural communities in Atlantic Canada. This facility is an important resource for wildlife managers and the scientific community in Atlantic Canada.

An inventory of waterfalls was undertaken by *DNRE* in 1999. Each waterfall was surveyed for uncommon, rare and other flora, recreation potential and accessibility.

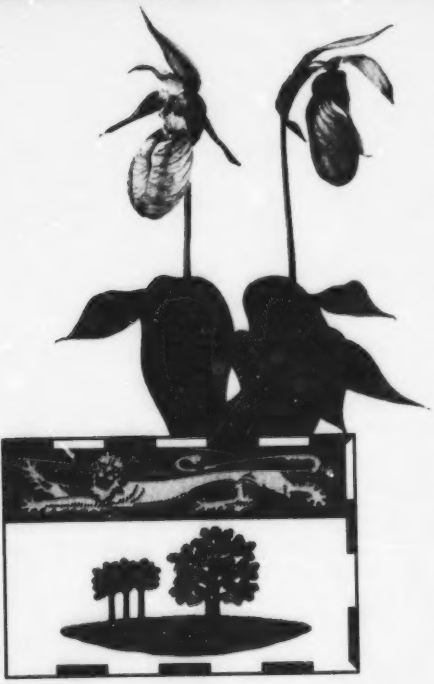
DNRE continued to administer the *Ecologically Sensitive Lands Program* on behalf of *Environment Canada*. Several New Brunswick landowners have donated ecologically sensitive properties to non-government conservation organizations under this program during the past three years.

Work continued in 1999 on refining New Brunswick's *Ecological Land Classification* at the ecodistrict, ecosection and ecosite levels.

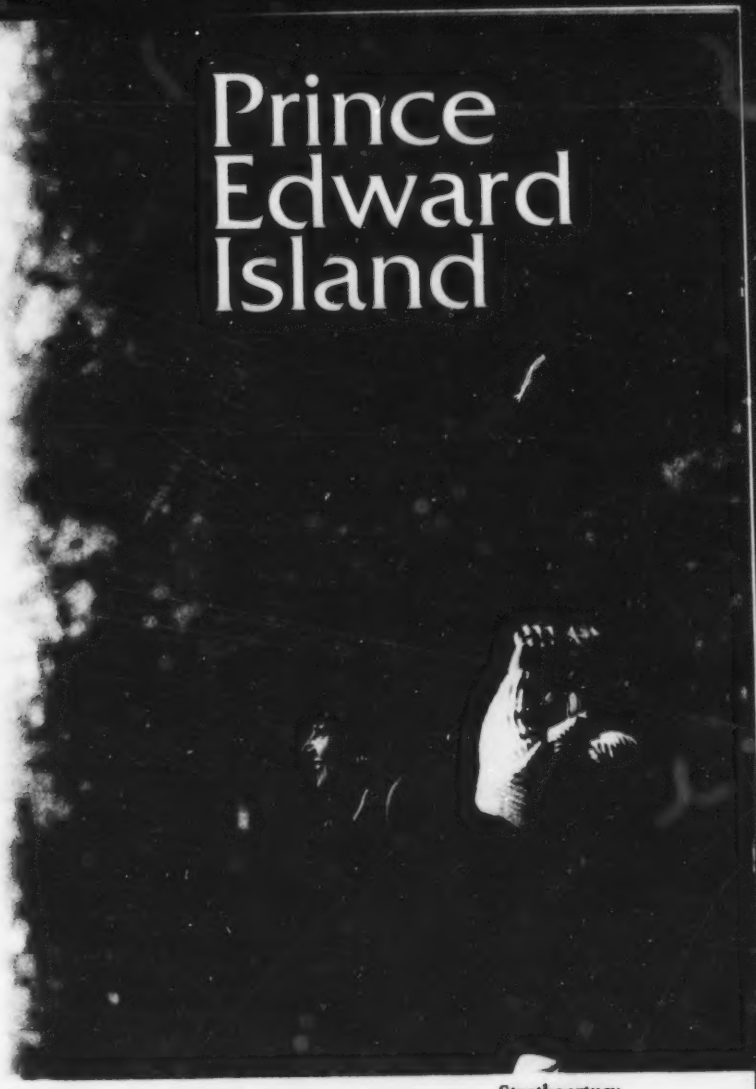
THE PROGRESS CONTINUES

It is anticipated that a number of resource conservation and recreation development initiatives will continue to be pursued in New Brunswick over the coming months and years. Development is expected to continue on several trail systems that are presently under construction. Further development is anticipated on the **Fundy Linear Park** and management plans are to be prepared for the 156,000 hectares which were acquired from *Georgia Pacific Resins Inc*. The management of ecological reserves, conservation areas and *Outdoor Network Properties* will remain a priority for New Brunswick. It is also expected that NGOs and other private sector interests will continue with their initiatives to conserve biodiversity.

Considerable anticipation is also building on the proposed *Protected Areas Strategy*. A multi-stakeholder committee, which was established to review the *Strategy* and to advise government on its implementation, is expected to submit its recommendations to the province in the near future. A government decision on these recommendations is expected later this year.■



Prince Edward Island

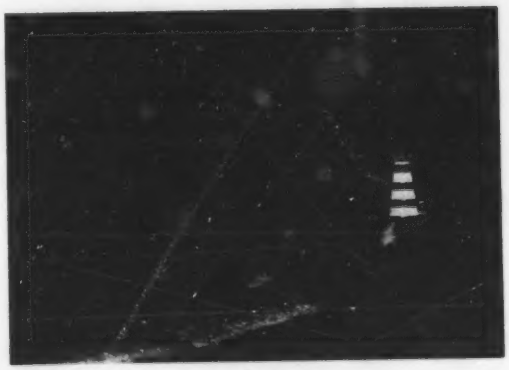


Strathgartney, Prince Edward Island

In 1989, the *World Wildlife Fund* boldly challenged jurisdictions to protect 12% of their land mass. In the autumn of 1991, the *Minister of Environment* announced the PEI *Significant Environmental Areas Plan*, with plans to protect ninety-four sites of seven habitat types. The plan recognized the small proportion of Crown land on Prince Edward Island (about 10%) and the crucial need for private landowners to participate in protecting some identified sites in order to realize the stated goal.

With these factors considered, the *Significant Areas Plan* called for the government to protect 7% of the Island in the long term, with some portion of at least seventy of ninety-four sites protected by the year 2000.

This commitment by government was upgraded a year later when the provincial, territorial and federal *Parks, Environment and Wildlife Ministers* agreed to a *Statement of Commitment to Complete Canada's Protected Areas.* This pledged that the province would make every effort to complete the network of protected areas representative of land-based natural regions by the year 2000, and accelerate the protection of areas representative of marine natural regions.



West Point, Prince Edward Island

The biggest challenge for PEI has been to work with a limited provincially-owned land resource...

MEASURABLE PROGRESS

Montague Watershed, Prince Edward Island

Since January 1, 1993, the Province has designated 27,600 hectares of land under the *Natural Areas Protection Act (NAPA)* in accordance with the *Significant Environmental Areas Plan*, with 17% of these lands being owned privately. Covenants under the *Act* ensure that these lands will be retained in their natural state in perpetuity. A special achievement was the acquisition of the spectacular **Greenwich Sand Dune System** and its subsequent designation as a Natural Area under the *Natural Areas Protection Act*. This land was later donated to the Federal Government for inclusion in **Prince Edward Island National Park**.

In addition, the province has conducted a review of all provincially owned lands and identified and further consolidated land in larger blocks of forest and wetland habitats to be designated as *Wildlife Management Areas*. As of March 31, 2000, 39,300 hectares of *Wildlife Management Area* have been added to the system of representative protected areas on PEI. This too is a special achievement in that it counteracts the prevalent fragmentation of habitats; much forested land is distributed in smaller holdings within a patchwork of privately held agricultural lands.

There has been some loss of protected provincial park during the reporting period. The overall net gain of 5,900 hectares represents 1% of the provincial land mass and together with previously protected lands in the province, including **Prince Edward Island National Park**, brings the total protected area to 3.2% of the provincial land base or about halfway to the goal of 7% protection.

ward Island

Townshed Woodlot, Prince Edward Island

The biggest challenge for PEI has been to work with a limited provincially-owned land resource, and to involve private landowners in the business of protecting the ecological features of the province. Fortunately, there has been a good deal of commitment demonstrated by private individuals. The involvement of the *Island Nature Trust*, both in acquiring and protecting lands, and in encouraging other private landowners to do so, has been instrumental in this process. *Ducks Unlimited Canada* also provided some funding for a very successful wetlands stewardship program leading to the protection of some important privately held wetland areas.

The passage of better legislation to encourage the donation of *Ecologically Sensitive Land* under the *Federal Income Tax Act* has had positive results with several properties donated and protected under *NAPA*.

The challenge to protect marine areas around PEI has been answered with some important steps toward real progress. First, the concept of *Marine Protected Areas* has been endorsed by the Government of Prince Edward Island and a pilot project to protect the **Basin Head Lagoon** is ongoing. In December 1998, public meetings were held in the local area and a working committee was formed to pursue this goal. Among others, fishermen and representatives of the federal *Department of Fisheries and Oceans* are members of the committee, and the area has been listed as an "Area of Interest" under *The Oceans Act*. At present, the committee is sponsoring a landowner contact program to determine the concerns of neighbouring landowners.

Offshore Island, Prince Edward Island

Greenwich, Prince Edward Island

Woodlot, Prince Edward Island

THE PROMISE OF THE FUTURE

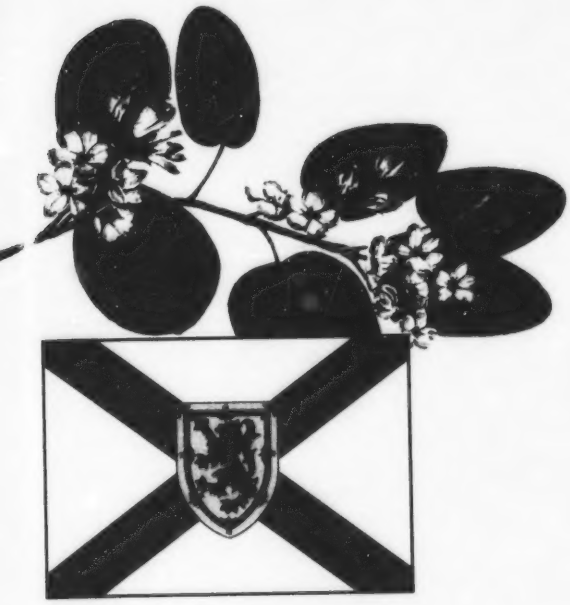
The province is awaiting the results of a study by the *Island Nature Trust* on the level of representation of forested protected areas, and it is expected that more forested lands and more upland hardwood, in particular, will be included in the *Significant Environmental Areas Plan*. It is hoped that this target list will be extensively revised to recognize that some private lands may never be protected, and to include areas of equal biological heritage with more likelihood of designation under *NAPA*. The province continues to plan for the protection of 7% of its land mass.

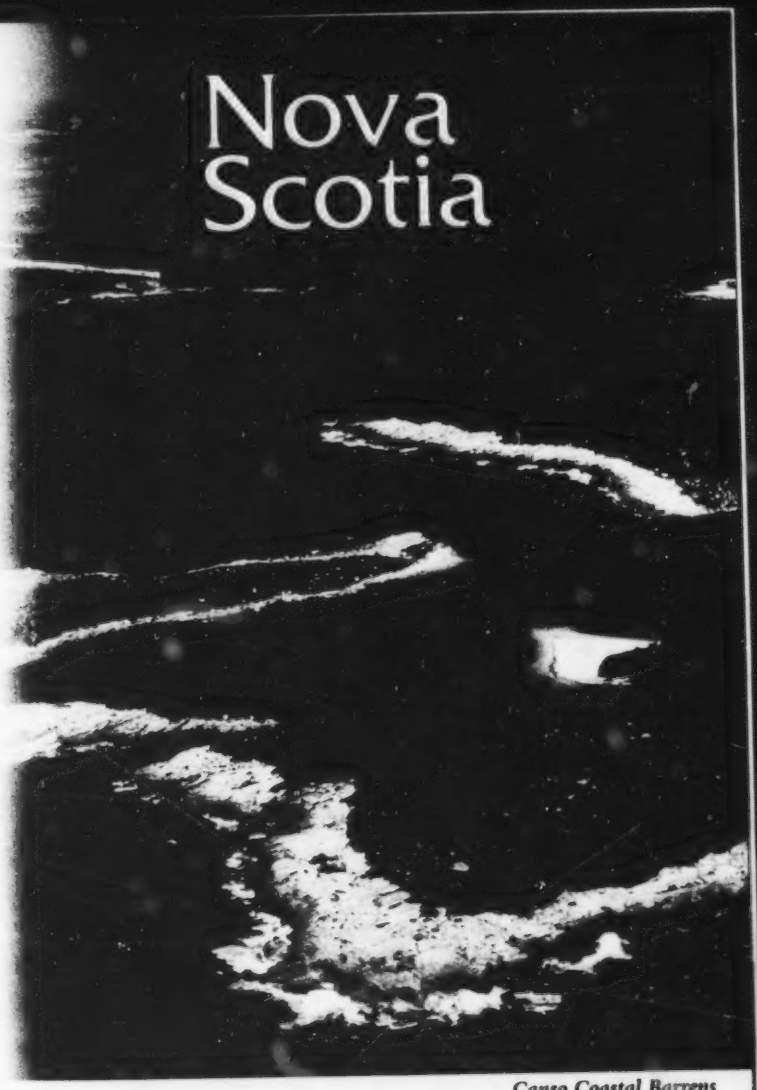
The Government of PEI announced in the Throne Speech (to open the Fall 1999 sitting of the *Legislature*) that a system of Provincial Forests covering some 18,900 hectares would be brought in under the *Forest Management Act*. This will be a working forest which will contribute to the maintenance of forest cover in a province heavily influenced by agriculture and tourism development. There are some very positive implications for species conservation in such a system of Provincial Forests.■

Beach fern, Prince Edward Island

Indian Pipe, Prince Edward Island

Nova Scotia





Canso Coastal Barrens Wilderness Area, Nova Scotia

The Government of Nova Scotia is committed to the establishment of a comprehensive system of parks and protected areas that incorporates representative examples of the province's natural landscapes, as well as sites and features of outstanding natural value and outdoor recreational resources that offer quality opportunities for wilderness recreation and nature tourism. With respect to marine reserves, the Province will encourage and participate in the planning and establishment of a marine protected areas system that will benefit Nova Scotia. Responsibilities for parks and protected areas in Nova Scotia are shared between the *departments of Natural Resources (DNR)* and *Environment (DOE)*.

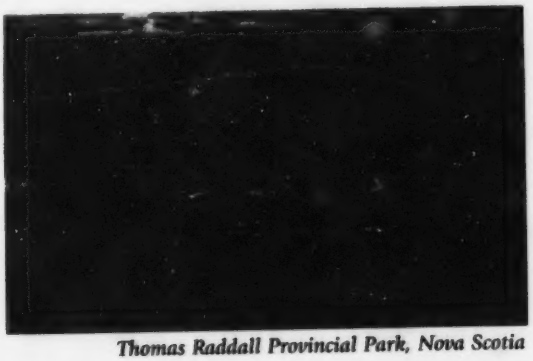
PROGRESS TOWARD THE GOAL

Nova Scotia's commitment to the establishment of a comprehensive parks and protected areas system began with a multi-year planning and public consultation process that was initiated in 1990. A landscape classification system was developed that identified eighty distinct natural landscapes. It is this system which has served as the framework for protected areas planning over the last decade. An inventory and evaluation of Crown lands was conducted in the early 1990's, and thirty-one candidate protected areas found to best represent the province's natural landscapes were identified. The presence of outstanding natural sites or features and potential for wilderness recreation or nature tourism were also considered in the selection of these candidate areas. The thirty-one candidates were featured in the *Proposed Systems Plan for Parks and Protected Areas in Nova Scotia*, which was released for public information, review and comment in March 1994.

Following the release of the *Proposed Systems Plan*, an independent public review committee held public meetings at thirteen locations across Nova Scotia. The report of the public review committee, including 63 recommendations, was accepted by Government in December 1995.

Nova Scotia's *Protected Areas Strategy* was released in February 1997, together with two companion pieces, entitled *Action Plan: Nova Scotia's Protected Areas*, and *Interim Management Guidelines: Candidate Protected Areas*. The *Strategy* commits to the designation of Nova Scotia's protected areas under legislation, as nature reserves, wilderness areas, or provincial parks.

- Nature reserves are relatively small sites primarily aimed at protecting unique, rare, or outstanding natural phenomena. Their main use is for scientific research and education.
- Wilderness areas are relatively large, and designed to protect representative examples of natural landscapes as well as outstanding natural phenomena. They are



Thomas Raddall Provincial Park, Nova Scotia

Tobeatic Wilderness Area, Nova Scotia

...ignecto ...al Park, ...a Scotia

used for scientific research, education, and a variety of recreational activities such as hiking, canoeing, fishing, and hunting.

- Protection-oriented provincial parks may represent natural landscapes and/or preserve outstanding natural phenomena. They also provide a range of recreational opportunities such as hiking, nature-study, picnicking, car-camping, and beach activities.

The commitment to the enactment of new protected areas legislation was fulfilled in December, 1998 with the passage of the *Wilderness Areas Protection Act*, which also effected the designation of the 31 candidate protected areas. Some of the most outstanding wilderness areas in the province include:

- The **Tobeatic Wilderness Area** (104,000 hectares) represents four ecologically distinct landscapes of Nova Scotia, and includes unique attributes such as old forests, rare coastal plain flora, and relatively large moose and bear populations. The **Tobeatic** is the largest remaining wilderness area in the Maritime provinces and borders directly on **Kejimkujik National Park**. Its extensive network of waterways are traditional canoe travel routes.
- **Waverley-Salmon River Long Lake Wilderness Area** (8,700 hectares) is located immediately adjacent to Halifax-Dartmouth, the province's largest urban center. This area represents the Eastern Shore Granite Ridge landscape and contains prominent granite ridges and numerous lakes, which provide outstanding hiking and canoeing opportunities. Old growth hemlock, pine and spruce forests occur here.
- **Economy River Wilderness Area** (6,100 hectares) is situated in the northern part of mainland Nova Scotia. This area represents the Cobequid Mountains landscape, and contains climax and old forests of sugar maple, yellow birch and red spruce. The area also protects much of the Economy River within a steep sided gorge that harbours rare plants. The area is noted for its spring wild flowers, scenic waterfalls, and hiking opportunities.
- **Canso Coastal Barrens Wilderness Area** protects an 8,000-hectare tract of pristine coastline along the province's eastern shore region. This area contains outstanding barrens, bogs, old coastal forests and an abundance of coastal habitats. Spectacular rock formations, numerous islands and a highly indented coastline provide outstanding opportunities for kayaking and boating.
- The **Polletts Cove-Aspy Fault Wilderness Area** (27,200 hectares) is located on the extreme northern tip of Cape Breton Island, adjacent to **Cape Breton Highlands National Park**. This area represents four landscape types, and protects numerous outstanding natural features, including old growth deciduous forests, rare plants, coastal mountain barrens, boreal wetlands, and canyon mazes. The area is noted for its spectacular highland hiking and wildlife viewing opportunities.

Legislation enabling the designation of nature reserves (*Special Places Protection Act*) and provincial parks (*Parks Act*) was enacted prior to the release of the *Protected Areas Strategy*. The *Protected Areas Strategy* also commits to the establishment of 5 new nature reserves under the *Special Places Protection Act*, and the designation or classification of 5 protection-oriented provincial parks under the *Parks Act*.

Currently, Nova Scotia has seven designated nature reserves, with three additional candidates awaiting designation. Nova Scotia's designated and candidate nature reserves include ecosystems supporting nationally or provincially rare or vulnerable species (eg. Pink coreopsis, Plymouth gentian) and rare or threatened ecosystems (eg. old growth forests, outstanding wetlands, coastal barrens), as well as representative examples of ecosystems typical of the province.

Nova Scotia has twenty-seven protection-oriented provincial park and park reserve properties. Four of these have recently been designated as provincial parks, and a fifth designation is anticipated within the coming year. Notable examples of these designated properties include:

- **Thomas Raddall Provincial Park** (650 hectares) is located in Nova Scotia's rugged South Shore region. This park protects representative elements of the Shelburne Headlands landscape, as well as coastal forests, wetlands and coastal habitats. Park facilities include a campground, beach access and hiking trails.
- **Cape Chignecto Provincial Park** (4,300 hectares), situated in northern Nova Scotia, protects representative elements of the Chignecto Slopes landscape and contains old forests, rare plants, steep canyons and the highest coastal cliffs on the Nova Scotia mainland. The park provides a 45-km hiking trail system, which parallels the cliff line overlooking the Bay of Fundy.
- **Caribou-Munroes Island Provincial Park** (250 hectares) protects representative examples of the Northumberland Strait Coastal Plain landscape, including extensive sandflats and sand beaches, coastal forests, salt marshes and coastal dune systems. The island's relatively undisturbed character, in a landscape whose shores are heavily developed, provides valuable wildlife habitat and offers excellent opportunities for outdoor education and nature appreciation. The park offers camping and day-use facilities.

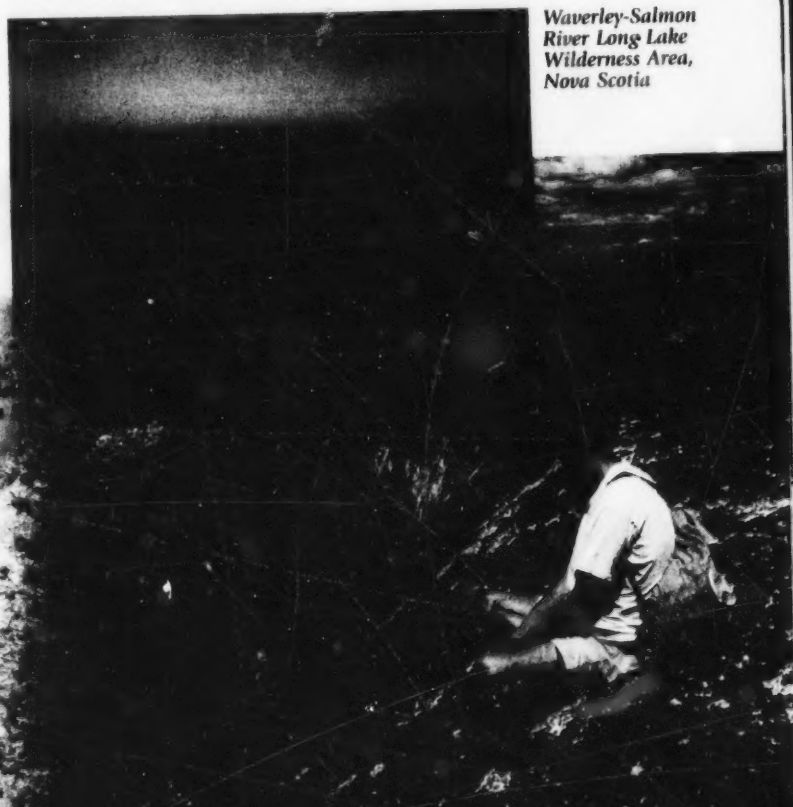
Prior to the initiation of the *Protected Areas Strategy*, seven of the eighty natural landscapes were adequately represented in parks and protected areas. With the designation of the thirty-one wilderness areas, this figure increased to twenty-six. The designated wilderness areas total 285,700 hectares and occupy approximately 19% of all Crown land in Nova Scotia, or just over 5% of the province. The area protected in all land categories (federal ,provincial, private) now totals approximately 8% of Nova Scotia. This is particularly noteworthy, in light of the fact that less than 30% of the province is publicly owned (provincial or federal).

A FUTURE BUILT ON PARTNERSHIPS

A management framework is currently being developed to guide the implementation of the *Wilderness Areas Protection Act*, and to ensure the protection of the new wilderness areas. The protected areas planning and consultation process will continue, with management requirements being addressed on a priority basis for individual wilderness areas. Partnerships, especially at the community level, will be encouraged for the planning, development, and ongoing management of these areas.

Parks and Protected Areas divisions of *DNR* and *DOE*, respectively, are participating in a province-wide integrated resource management process for Crown land, which is being led by *DNR*. Through this process, consideration will be given to areas that may warrant recognition for special management purposes or as potential candidates for inclusion in the *Parks and Protected Areas System*.

Improving the level of landscape representation in Nova Scotia's Parks and Protected Areas System is a major challenge, as almost 70% of the province is privately owned. Any significant increases in the protection of private lands can only realistically be achieved through the encouragement of voluntary stewardship initiatives by private landowners and non-governmental organizations such as the *Nova Scotia Nature Trust* and the *Nature Conservancy of Canada*.



Waverley-Salmon River Long Lake Wilderness Area, Nova Scotia

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Toward this end, the *Minister of Environment*, in collaboration with the *Nova Scotia Nature Trust*, recently established a committee to examine and advance recommendations on how best to address barriers to private land stewardship, such as tax disincentives. It is anticipated that the work of this committee, which in addition to the *Nova Scotia Nature Trust* and the *Department of Environment*, includes representation from the *Nature Conservancy of Canada* and the *departments of Natural Resources, Housing and Municipal Affairs*, and *Finance*, will lead to further progress in regard to private land conservation.

The Province of Nova Scotia is steadily moving forward with its protected areas initiative. These efforts will proceed through partnerships involving government agencies, most notably the *departments of Environment and Natural Resources*, conservation-minded organizations, community groups, and landowners. Specific undertakings that will be addressed as priorities include:

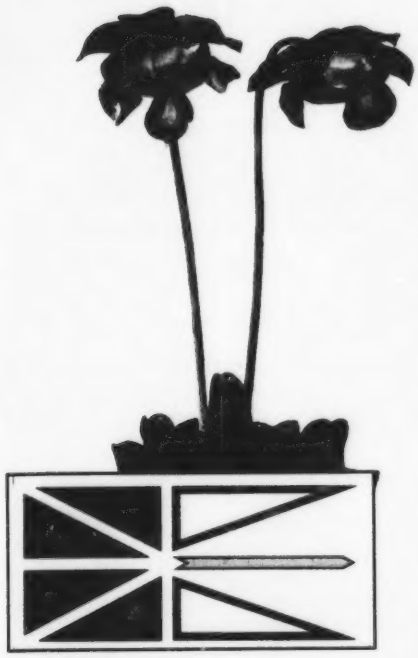
- updating the Province's protected area strategy;
- planning and consultation initiatives aimed at providing for the effective management of existing designated areas;
- updating the *Special Places Protection Act* and the designation of new nature reserves;
- the ongoing inventory and assessment of sites of natural value;
- the encouragement of private land stewardship; and
- continued participation in the *Department of Natural Resources*-led integrated resource planning process for Crown land.

With a comprehensive strategy, supported by strong legislation and formal designations, Nova Scotia is confident that future generations will enjoy even more of the beauty and biodiversity that the province offers in abundance.■

Economy River Wilderness Area, Nova Scotia

Polletts Cove-Aspy Fault Wilderness Area, Nova Scotia

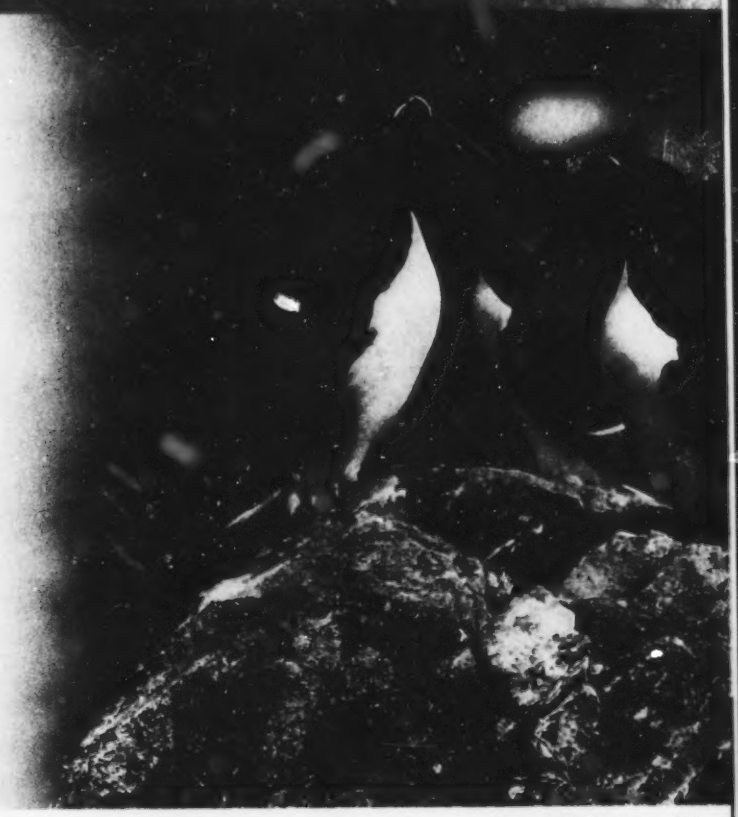
Newfoundland and Labrador



Newfoundland and Labrador has a wealth of natural features. The diversity of our natural environment is reflected in such places as the rugged South Coast, the maritime barrens of the Avalon Peninsula, the forested river valleys of the Great Northern Peninsula, the seabird islands of Witless Bay and Baccalieu, the tablelands of Gros Morne, and the sub-Arctic tundra of northern Labrador. It is a rich natural heritage that we all treasure, that has sustained us for centuries, and continues to contribute to our enviable way of life. It is an important resource that we must maintain and protect for present and future generations.

We have already made significant strides to protect some of our most valued natural features and landscapes. The province has established two wilderness reserves and fourteen ecological reserves. Many of them, such as the **Cape St. Mary's Ecological Reserve**, the **Mistaken Point Ecological Reserve**, and the **Avalon Wilderness Reserve** are internationally recognized. In cooperation with the Government of Canada, we have also established national parks and national historic sites. **L'Anse Aux Meadows National Historic Site** and **Gros Morne National Park** have both been recognized as *World Heritage Sites*.

Still, we have many important areas that are unprotected. The important and challenging task is to identify these areas and work cooperatively with the public, industry, and other interests towards their protection. We all share responsibility to protect the natural values that sustain our environment and our economy. The goal of our *Wilderness and Ecological Reserves Program*, the primary tool for natural heritage protection in our province, reflects this responsibility.



Razorbills (Alca torda), Cape St. Mary's Ecological Reserve, Newfoundland and Labrador

In 1980, the provincial government enacted the Newfoundland and Labrador *Wilderness and Ecological Reserves Act (WER Act)* to provide for the establishment and protection of natural areas designated as wilderness and ecological reserves. The *WER Act* is considered one of the best of its kind in Canada. Not only does it ensure that the public has a say in the establishment and management of reserves, but its high level of protection ensures these protected natural areas will always maintain their unique natural qualities.

The *WER Act* provides for two different types of protected areas: wilderness reserves and ecological reserves. Wilderness reserves protect large wilderness areas, usually defined by the habitat requirements of a wide-ranging mammal such as caribou, and provide for continued traditional outdoor activities such as hunting, fishing, canoeing, and hiking. Ecological reserves are smaller, protecting representative ecosystems or special species and their habitat.

The *Wilderness and Ecological Reserves Program* is administered by the *Parks and Natural Areas Division* of

We all share responsibility to protect the natural values that sustain our environment and our economy.

Bay Du Nord Wilderness Reserve, Newfoundland and Labrador

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the *Department of Tourism, Culture and Recreation*. The Division works cooperatively with the *Wilderness and Ecological Reserves Advisory Council (WERAC)*, an independent group of citizens - all volunteers - from all regions of the province and with a wide variety of backgrounds.

PROGRESS

As of June 2000, 1,824,200 hectares have been protected in natural areas in Newfoundland and Labrador, amounting to 4.5% of the province . These account for approximately 7.9% of the Island and 3.23% of Labrador. The scale of this protected area system is difficult to imagine. It is over three times the size of Prince Edward Island and three times as large as the combined protected areas systems of the other Atlantic Provinces. While the protected portion of Labrador is about half the national average, the protected area on the Island exceeds the national average (7.8% vs ~ 6.6%). This impressive record is the result of a myriad of protection mechanisms.

WILDERNESS AND ECOLOGICAL RESERVES

Except for the Torngat Mountains area, *Wilderness and Ecological Reserves* account for the majority of protected lands (488,400 hectares or 1.20%). There are two wilderness reserves, fourteen ecological reserves, and two provisional reserves.

FEDERALLY PROTECTED LANDS

There are two national parks (i.e. **Gros Morne** and **Terra Nova**), five national historic sites and three migratory bird sanctuaries that protect 230,600 hectares or 0.57% of the province.

PROVINCIAL PARKS

Twenty-five provincial parks protect 22,600 hectares or 0.05% of the province. These parks protect portions of ecoregions, outstanding natural environments or special features, and also provide for outdoor recreational facility development such as campgrounds and hiking trails.

OTHER PROVINCIALLY PROTECTED LANDS

Three wildlife reserves, a nature park, a public reserve and a development control area protect about 137,600 hectares or 0.34% of the province. These areas serve a variety of purposes, but they all contain mechanisms to protect the natural landscape.

The proposed **Torngat Mountains National Park**, encompassing an area of 945,000 hectares (2.3% of the province or 3.2% of Labrador), is protected as a *Special Park Management Area* and as *Mineral Exempt Lands*. As a result of these measures taken by the province, no additional land or mineral development can occur. These, and other on-going interim protection efforts, illustrate that the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador is fully committed to protecting this area.

HIGHLIGHTS SINCE 1992

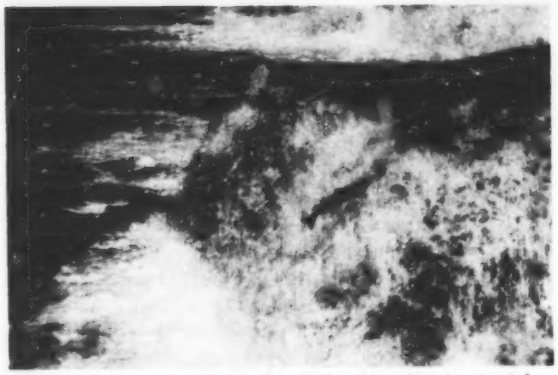
Almost two-thirds of the entire protected areas system in Newfoundland and Labrador has been established since the province signed the *Statement of Commitment* in Aylmer, Quebec in 1992. Protected areas have been established to protect endangered species, globally important seabird colonies and rare plant sites, as well as vast tracts of wilderness.

Torngat Mountains (Special Park Management Area - 2000)

Over 945,000 hectares, the **Torngat Mountains area** is the single largest protected area in Atlantic Canada. Virtually free of development, this spectacular area has great historical and spiritual significance for the peoples of Labrador. There are several very important archeological sites. The entire range of the Torngat Mountains caribou herd, as well as a portion of the 800,000 strong George River herd, falls within this area. Large predators, such as polar bears, black bears, and wolves also roam portions of the area. Endangered species such as the peregrine falcon and the eastern harlequin duck also nest throughout the region. As a result of the protection efforts taken by the province, the Torngat Mountains will continue to evoke images of stark, untamed wilderness for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians and, indeed, the world.

Baccalieu Island (Ecological Reserve - 1995)

Supporting almost seven million seabirds, Baccalieu Island is one of the largest seabird colonies in the world. Approximately 3,360,000 pairs of Leach's Storm Petrels (*Oceanodroma leucorhoa*) nest in arm-deep burrows throughout the 538 hectare island. Over 40,000 Atlantic Puffins (*Fratercula arctica*) also burrow in peaty soil found in several deep valleys. Other seabird species include Northern Fulmar (only one of three nesting sites in Eastern North America), Northern Gannet (one of six), Black-legged Kittiwake, Common Murre and Thick-billed Murres, Razorbills and Black Guillemots. The reserve also includes a one-kilometre marine boundary. Newfoundland is the only province in Canada that includes marine boundaries in its seabird ecological reserves. In fact, with the addition of this reserve, over 95% of the 10 million nesting seabirds in the province are protected in these reserves. This achievement is unequalled in North America.



Atlantic Salmon jumping in Sir Richard Squires Memorial Provincial Park, Newfoundland and Labrador

Burnt Cape Ecological Reserve, Newfoundland and Labrador

Dwarf Hawksbeard (Crepis nana), Burnt Cape Ecological Reserve, Newfoundland and Labrador

Burnt Cape (Ecological Reserve - 1999)

On the extreme northern tip of the Island of Newfoundland, this small peninsula supports over 300 species of vascular plants, including thirty-four rare plants. It is the only known location in the world for the endemic Burnt Cape Cinquefoil (*Potentilla usticapensis*). Other rare plants include a rich mixture of Gulf of St. Lawrence endemics, Arctic species and calciphiles (calcium loving plants). Examples include Bayard's Pussytoes (*Antennaria bayardii*), Alpine Milkvetch (*Astragalus alpinus var. alpinus*), Fairy Slipper Orchid (*Calypso bulbosa*) and Dwarf Hawksbeard (*Crepis nana*). Also featuring fossils and an impressive list of birds, this treeless, windswept peninsula has an alluring and evocative appeal. With its protection, approximately 60% of all the rare vascular plants species on the Island of Newfoundland are protected in parks and reserves.

Cape St. Mary's Ecological Reserve, Newfoundland and Labrador

Little Grand Lake (Ecological Reserve, Wildlife Reserve, Public Reserve - 1999)

This reserve was established primarily to protect the habitat of the endangered Newfoundland Pine Marten. Considered by many to be a subspecies, the Newfoundland marten are giants compared to their mainland cousins. It is not unusual for some individuals to have over three times the body mass of mainland marten and a correspondingly larger territory. This protected area consists of three different types of protection regimes. Most importantly, the core *Ecological Reserve* (the strongest protection) contains enough habitat for the minimum effective population of marten. This reserve also captures adequate samples of three ecoregions. It is a shining example of a balanced approach that allows for strict conservation and responsible, sustainable development.

LAYING THE GROUND WORK FOR THE FUTURE

Government has decided that a more systematic approach is required to accelerate the protection of natural areas. This approach will ensure:

- that representative portions of each of the province's distinctive natural regions are protected
- that the protection of special sites such as seabird colonies and rare plants is accelerated.

We are developing a new plan, called the *Natural Areas Plan*, in which Government proposes to protect and preserve certain areas that are examples of our distinctive natural heritage for the benefit, education, and enjoyment of the province's present and future generations. The plan will identify, on a province-wide scale, candidate areas that have been designed and selected using an ecoregion approach, based on principles of conservation biology. It will contain candidate sites that have been identified as the best representative portions of ecoregions needing protection, and candidate sites that contain special and rare features in urgent need of protection.

The proposed plan will provide the public and industry with a complete picture of the provincial government's objectives for natural areas protection. Extensive consultations will occur, providing everyone with an opportunity to thoroughly review and comment on each proposed area, and the plan as a whole. Only then will government make further decisions about its implementation.

Ultimately, it will protect only those lands that our people feel should be protected for all time.■